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THE
HORSE AND HIS RIDER.



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A VICIOUS RACEHORSE.

THE
HORSE AND HIS RIDER:

OR,

Sketches and Anecdotes of the Noble Quadruped,
and of Equestrian Nations.

BY ROLLO SPRINGFIELD.
"



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THE PILLION





THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER.



CHAPTER I.

DOMESTICATION OF THE HORSE—HORSE FURNITURE—VARIOUS
BREEDS—BLOOD HORSES—PONIES.



THE reduction of the horse to the domestic state, as Buffon justly observes, is the greatest acquisition from the animal world ever made by the art and industry of man. Every one knows and admires the graceful symmetry, the speed, vigour, docility, and endurance of that noble creature; but few, perhaps, have reflected on the important part he has played in the history of our race; few are aware how much we owe it to him, that we at this day are not as rude and wretched as our barbarian forefathers, but live surrounded by those countless blessings which are

the birthright of every child born in a civilised land. We fear that there has been little gratitude or humanity evinced in our general treatment of the horse; and now that we rush along like the wind on the wings of steam, we are perhaps in danger of still more undervaluing his worth. But had we never known his aid, how different far would have been the fortunes of mankind! how hardly would it have fulfilled its destiny, to "multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth!" Unaided by the strength and swiftness of this generous servant, men would but partially and slowly have emerged from barbarism; at the most they would have congregated into tribes and petty states, covering only as much ground as might be traversed in a day's march or two on foot; and these would have been perpetually engaged in war and rapine: but peace, order, plenty, knowledge, and national power, could never have been established or have made progress, so long as men, divided by wide tracts of country, had no means of rapidly communicating with each other, and of uniting together for their mutual welfare.

Neither sacred nor profane history informs us in what country the horse was first domesticated, or

whether he was first used for draught or riding. It is probable that the animal was employed for both purposes in very early times, and in various parts of the world; but though many of the ancients possessed great mastery over their horses, and performed with them admirable feats of skill and agility, it is nevertheless surprising by what slow steps the arts and inventions, connected with horsemanship, have reached their present degree of perfection. The polished Greeks, as well as the ruder nations of northern Africa, for a long while rode without either saddle or bridle, guiding their horses with the voice or the hand, or with a light switch. They touched the animal on the right or left of the face to make him turn in the opposite direction; they stopped him by touching his muzzle, and urged him forward with the heel. The horses must have been excellently trained, to be governed by such slight means, in the violence of their course, or in the tumult of battle; but the attention, docility, and memory of this animal are such, that it is hard to say to what a degree of obedience he may not be brought.

Bridles and bits were at length introduced; but many centuries elapsed before any thing that can properly be called a saddle was used. Instead of these, cloths, single or padded, and skins of wild beasts,

often richly adorned, were placed beneath the rider, but always without stirrups. It is a very extraordinary fact that even the Romans, in the times when luxury was carried to the utmost excess amongst them, never devised so simple an expedient for assisting the horseman to mount, lessening his fatigue, and securing his seat, although painful diseases were not unfrequently caused by the habit of riding with the feet unsupported. Many ancient sculptures prove that the horsemen of almost every country used to mount on the right side of the animal, in order the better to grasp the mane which hangs on that side. The practice is invariably reversed in modern days, and none but a Billy Button would think of mounting on the *off* side, notwithstanding the classical authority that may be alleged for so doing.

The ancient heroes generally leaped on their horses' backs; or their spear, if they carried one, had a loop, or projection, about two feet from the bottom, which served them as a step. The horse was sometimes trained to lower his neck and back, or to kneel down for his rider; and both in Greece and Rome the local magistracy were bound to see that blocks, for mounting from (what the Scotch call *loupin-on stanes*), were placed along the roads at convenient

distances. The great, however, thought it more dignified to use living blocks, and to climb into their seats, by setting their feet on the bent backs of their slaves; and many who could not command such costly help used to carry a light ladder about with them—a curious piece of horse furniture!

What a signal instance was given of the deep humiliation into which Imperial Rome had fallen, when a haughty Persian monarch mounted his horse from the back of the Emperor Valerian! The use of stirrups left pride and insolence without a pretext for thus degrading God's image. Instead of offering his back to be trampled on, the servant now only held the stirrup for his lord. In the middle ages, the great were fond of exacting this token of servility from their humbled rivals: Emperors of Germany have held the stirrup for the Pope; and Henry II. of England, when his rancour against Thomas à Becket was hottest, thought to cajole the great prelate by a similar show of feigned respect.

The first distinct notice we have of the use of the saddle occurs in an edict of the Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 385); from which we also learn that it was usual for those who hired post-horses to provide their own saddles. The edict directs that no traveller shall use a saddle weighing more than sixty pounds! Such

cumbrous contrivances must have been more like the howdahs placed on the backs of elephants, than the light and elegant saddle of modern times. Fortunately for the soldiers of those days, it does not appear that the military punishment of "carrying the saddle" was devised until a later period. It was commonly inflicted on horse-soldiers, and even on knights in the middle ages, for breach of discipline. A saddle, bridle, and other appurtenances were laid on the offender's shoulders, and he was compelled to march about for a certain length of time, without stopping, exposed to the scoffs and jeers of all who saw him thus oddly accoutred. Well for him that his burden did not amount to the liberal weight allowed by the Roman emperor!

Side-saddles for ladies were an invention of comparatively recent date. The first seen in England was made for Anne of Bohemia, Richard the Second's queen. It was, probably, more like a pillion than the side-saddle of our day; and if any of our young readers do not know what is meant by the word "pillion," their grandmamas may, perhaps, be able to describe the thing to them from recollection, for it was in high fashion not a great many years ago. It was a sort of very low-backed arm-chair, which was fastened on the horse's croup, behind the saddle, on

which a man rode who had all the care of managing the horse, while the lady sat at her ease, supporting herself by grasping a belt which he wore, or by passing her arm round his body—if the gentleman was not too ticklish.

Horse-shoeing was not practised for many centuries after the horse himself was in very general use; nor were hoof-protectors essentially necessary until paved tracts and hard roads became more frequent than they were in old times. The first foot defence of the horse seems to have been copied from that of his master. It was a sort of sandal, commonly made of matting, rope, or leather. The Emperor Nero, in his profusion, had his horses and mules shod with silver; and his Empress, Poppæa, was not content with less than gold for the same purpose. These sandals were very insecure, and were apt to be left sticking in the mud; they were, therefore, seldom put on the animal for the whole journey, but only at the worst places. Nor do they appear to have been adequate to protect the hoof from injury; for instance, when Mithridates was besieging the town of Cyzicus, in his first war against the Romans, he was obliged to send away his whole cavalry to Bithynia, because the horses' hoofs were all worn down, and their feet disordered.

Here again, as in the case of the stirrupless saddle, we are lost in wonder at the fact, that men should, for nearly a thousand years, have gone on fastening plates of metal under horses' hoofs by the clumsy means of strings and bands; and that it should never in all that time have occurred to them to try nails where strings had failed. Next to the inventive powers of men there is really nothing so wonderful as their want of inventiveness, and the stupid way in which they will continue from generation to generation, doing something very absurd from mere force of habit, and utter want of thought! It is humiliating to think, how men have been content to remain for ages separated by the smallest possible partitions from discoveries in the arts, that tend to the convenience and embellishment of life. We have had India rubber ever since America was explored, yet, until a few years ago, we made no use of it except for rubbing pencil marks out of paper!

Here follows a charade by no less eminent a person than the great statesman, Charles James Fox. Why do we introduce it in this place? That is a question which the ingenious reader will answer for himself when he shall have solved the charade. The key to it will be found in the preceding pages:—

“ Incribed on many a learned page,
In mystic characters and sage,
Long time my first has stood ;
And though its golden age be past,
In wooden walls it yet may last,
Till clothed in flesh and blood.

My second is a welcome prize
For those who love their curious eyes
With foreign sights to pamper ;
But should it chance their gaze to meet,
Al improvise, in the street,
Oh ! how 't would make them scamper !

My third 's a kind of wandering throne,
To woman limited alone,
The Salique law reversing ;
But when the imaginary queen
Prepares to act this novel scene,
Her royal part rehearsing ;
O'erturning her presumptuous plan,
Up jumps the old usurper—Man.”

The various uses for which the horse is habitually employed require corresponding varieties in the make and shape of the animal. The dray horses of the London brewers are very handsome ; but their beauty is of a different kind from that of the Newmarket racer. That which is a good quality in one kind of horse may be a defect in another. An animal, for instance, which is intended for the saddle ought to stand with his fore legs erect ; if they slope back,

wards from shoulder to hoof the rider must be very cautious, for he has to do with a stumbler. A draught-horse, on the other hand, ought to lean a little forward over his fore feet when at rest. That portion of his own weight which brings down the ill-made saddle-horse on his knees, is by the draught-horse thrown against the collar, and helps him in his labour. Look at a team straining hard to drag a heavy wagon out of a rut or over some obstruction: they fling themselves forward, so as to be kept from falling only by the traces, just as you may see a man doing who tugs at a rope fastened to a canal-boat, or a truck. Again, though the hunter and the racer are both made for speed, they must each exhibit certain peculiarities of form adapted to the work they have respectively to do. The hunter requires great strength and elasticity in his forehand, to enable him to bear the shock with which he alights on the ground from a leap. In the racer, on the contrary, the principal power is wanted from behind, to propel the animal forward in his gallop; and the very lowness of the forehand may throw more weight in front, and cause the whole machine to be more easily and speedily moved. The hind-legs of the greyhound are longer than the fore-legs; the difference is still more remarkable in the hare, and it is seen in an extraor-

dinary degree in the kangaroo, an animal whose running is a series of prodigious leaps. The celebrated Eclipse, who never was beaten, was remarkably low in front, his hind-quarters even rising above his fore ones. As we have mentioned the name of this unrivalled runner, we cannot do less than give some particulars of his history.

He was bred by the Duke of Cumberland, and sold at his death to Mr. Wildman, a sheep salesman, for seventy-five guineas. Colonel O'Kelly purchased a share of him from Wildman. In the spring of the following year, when the reputation of this wonderful animal was at its height, O'Kelly wished to become sole owner of him, and bought the remaining share for eleven hundred guineas.

O'Kelly, aware of his horse's powers, backed him freely on his first race in 1769. This excited curiosity among sporting men; they thought the colonel must have had some extraordinary reason for betting largely on a horse that no one had ever heard of before, and that had not given any public proof of his powers. Some persons, accordingly, tried to watch one of his trials; which the owner, no doubt, wished to keep as secret as possible. They were a little too late on the ground; but they found an old woman, who gave them all the information they

wanted. On their inquiring, whether she had seen a race, she replied, she could not tell whether it was a race or not, but she had just seen a horse with a white leg running away at a monstrous rate, and another horse, a great way behind, trying to run after him; but she was sure he would never catch the white-legged horse if he ran to the world's end.

The first heat was easily won, when O'Kelly, observing that the rider had been pulling at Eclipse during the whole of the race, offered a wager that he would *place* the horses in the next heat (that is, that he would name the order in which they would be when the foremost reached the winning post). This seemed a thing so highly improbable that he immediately had bets to a large amount. Being called on to declare, he replied—"Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere!" The event justified his prediction; for all the others were *distanced* by Eclipse with the greatest ease (that is, he was at the winning post before they had reached another 240 yards behind it, called the distancing post), and thus, in the language of the turf, they had no place.

The pecuniary value of Eclipse and his progeny must have been something enormous. He was the sire of 354 winners, and these netted to their owners more than £160,000, exclusive of plates and cups.

Ten years after he was withdrawn from the turf; O'Kelly was asked at what price he would sell him. At first he peremptorily refused to accept any price; but after some reflection, he said he would take £25,000, with an annuity of £500, besides certain privileges. The seeming extravagance of this sum excited considerable remark; but O'Kelly declared he had already cleared more than £25,000 by Eclipse, and that the animal was still young enough to earn double that sum.

From what we have said above, it appears that there are various standards of perfection for the horse's form, and that there must be a certain vagueness in any general description which shall include them all. It is not a little remarkable that we are indebted to Terentius Varro, who wrote about the year 70 B.C., for a description of the horse which, in the opinion of so excellent a judge as Mr. Youatt, has scarcely been surpassed in modern times:—"We may prognosticate great things of a colt," he says, "if, when running in the pastures, he is ambitious to get before his companions, and if, on coming to a river, he strives to be the first to plunge into it. His head should be small, his limbs clean and compact, his eyes bright and sparkling, his nostrils open and large, his ears placed near each other, his mane strong and full, his chest

broad, his shoulders flat and sloping backwards, his loins broad and strong, his tail full and bushy, his legs straight and even, his knees broad and well knit, his hoofs hard and tough, and his veins large and swelling over all his body."

The English thoroughbred horse, perhaps the finest animal of his kind in the world, derives his descent almost wholly from the Arab and the Barb. Instead of giving a prosaic description of his *points*, which those who desire it may find in books of a more technical character than ours: we will put him bodily before the reader in Barry Cornwall's vigorous lines:—

THE BLOOD HORSE.

"Gamarra is a noble steed;
Strong, black, and of the desert breed;
Full of fire, and full of bone;
All his line of fathers known;
Fine his nose, his nostrils thin,
But blown abroad by the pride within!
His mane, a stormy river flowing;
And his eyes like embers glowing
In the darkness of the night;
And his pace as swift as light.

Look,—around his straining throat
Grace and shifting beauty float!
Sinewy strength is on his reins,
And the red blood gallops through his veins;

Richer, redder, never ran
Through the boasting heart of man !
He can trace his lineage higher
Than the Bourbon dare aspire,
Douglas, Guzman, or the Guelph,
Or O'Brien's blood itself.

He, who hath no peer, was born
Here, upon a red March morn :
But his famous fathers dead
Were Arabs all, and Arab bred ;
And the last of that great line
Trod like one of race divine !

And yet,—he was but friend to one
Who fed him at the set of sun,
By some lone fountain fringed with green :
With *him*,—a roving Bedouin,
He lived (none else would he obey
Through all the hot Arabian day),
And died, untamed, upon the sands
Where Balkh amidst the desert stands ! ”

Nature has assigned to many races of animals certain geographical limits, beyond which they cannot thrive. Others, on the contrary, are so framed as to be capable of maintaining life and health in countries very widely diffused, and essentially differing in temperature, climate, and food, from those to which they appear indigenous. Fortunately for man, among this number are some of those animals that render him the most essential services,—as the dog, the ox, the

sheep, the hog, and the horse. The constitution of these useful allies is endowed with a capacity for adapting itself, more or less, to external circumstances; above all, their respective bulk undergoes notable variations proportioned to the ordinary supply of food within their reach. In the rich pastures of Flanders and of Lincolnshire the horse expands to its largest dimensions, whilst in mountainous regions and in northern islands it becomes a pony.

There is an East Indian pony called the Tattoo, commonly from ten to twelve hands high (a hand is four inches); they are sometimes much smaller. Tavernier describes one which he saw ridden by a young Mogul prince, which was not much larger than a greyhound. In 1765, one not more than seven hands, or twenty-eight inches high, was sent to England as a present to the Queen of George III. It was taken from the ship to the palace in a hackney-coach. It was of a dun colour, and its hair resembled that of a young fawn. It was four years old, well proportioned, had fine ears, a quick eye, with a handsome long tail, and was thoroughly good-natured and manageable.

Hurdwar, in Upper India, is the site of a great cattle fair; Colonel Davidson, describing his visit to this busy scene, says, that among the greatest curiosities

he witnessed were half-a-dozen powerful ponies from Usbeck Tartary, called *phooldars*, which means *flower-marked*. They were under thirteen hands high, and of the most curious compound colours or marks that can be imagined. A description cannot easily be given, but it may be attempted. Suppose, in the first place, that the animal is of a fine snow white; cover the white with large, irregular, bright bay spots; in the middle of these light bay let there be dark bay marbled spots; at every six or eight inches plant lozenge-shaped patches of a very dark iron grey; then sprinkle the whole with dark flea-bites. There is a phooldar! What a sensation one of these animals would excite in the London Parks!

The horses of the Feroe Islands are of small growth, but strong, swift, and sure of foot, going over the roughest places, so that a man may more surely rely on them than trust to his own feet. In Suderoe, one of these islands, they have a lighter and swifter breed than in any of the rest. On their backs the inhabitants pursue the sheep, which are wild in this island; the pony carries the man over places which would be otherwise inaccessible to him—follows his rider over others—enters into the full sport of the chase, and even knocks down and holds the prey under his feet until the rider can take possession of it.

The British islands produce several interesting breeds of ponies. The largest of these, the Scotch Galloway, is unfortunately almost extinct. It was from thirteen to fourteen hands high, of a bright bay or brown, with black legs, small head and neck, and peculiarly deep and clean legs. Its qualities were speed, stoutness, and surefootedness over a very rugged and mountainous country. Dandie Dinmont's famous Dumble was of this breed. Dr. Anderson thus describes a galloway belonging to himself:—"In point of elegance of shape it was a perfect picture, and in disposition it was gentle and compliant. It moved almost with a wish, and never tired. I rode this little creature for twenty-five years, and twice in that time I rode a hundred and fifty miles at a stretch, without stopping, except to bait, and that not for above an hour at a time. It came in at the last stage with as much ease and alacrity as it travelled the first. I could have undertaken to perform on this beast, when it was in its prime, sixty miles a day for a twelvemonth, without any extraordinary exertion."

The Exmoor ponies, though generally ugly enough, are hardy and useful: one of them has been known to clear a gate eight inches higher than his back. Those of Dartmoor are larger, and, if possible, uglier. Being admirably fitted for scrambling over the rough

roads and dreary wilds of that mountainous country, they are in great demand there. They exist almost in a state of nature. The late Captain Colgrave, governor of the prison, had a great desire to possess one of them somewhat superior in figure to his fellows; and having several men to assist him, they separated it from the herd. They drove it on some rocks by the side of a *tor* (an upright pointed hill). A man followed on horseback, while the captain stood below watching the chase. The little animal, being driven into a corner, leaped completely over the man and horse, and escaped.

The *sheltie*, or pony of the Shetland isles, is a very diminutive animal, sometimes not more than thirty inches high, and rarely exceeding thirty-eight. He is often exceedingly beautiful, with a small head, good tempered countenance, a short neck, fine towards the throttle, shoulders low and thick—in so little a creature far from being a blemish—back short, quarters expanded and powerful, legs flat and fine, and pretty round feet. These ponies possess immense strength for their size; will fatten upon almost any thing, and are perfectly docile. Mr. Youatt says that one of them, three feet in height, carried a man of twelve stone forty miles in one day.

Pony hunting used to be one of the favourite

amusements of the Welsh farmers and peasantry a century and a half ago, and it has not even now fallen altogether into disuse. The following story of one of these expeditions is related in the *Cambrian Quarterly Magazine* :—

“ A farmer, named Hugo Garonwy, lived in the neighbourhood of Llewyn Georie. Although he handled the small tilt plough, and other farming tools in their due season, yet the catching of the merlin, the fox, and the hare, were pursuits more congenial to his tastes; and the tumbles and thumps which he received, and from which no pony hunter was exempt, served but to attach him to the sport. Rugged, however, as were the Merioneddshire coast and its environs, and abounding with precipices and morasses, the hunter sometimes experienced worse mishaps, and so it happened with Garonwy.

“ He set out one morning with his lasso coiled round his waist, and attended by two hardy dependents and their greyhounds. The lasso was then familiar to the Welshman, and as adroitly managed by him as by any guacho on the plains of South America. As the hunters climbed the mountain's brow, the distant herd of ponies took alarm—sometimes galloping onwards, and then suddenly halting, and wheeling round, snorting as if in defiance of the

intruders, and furiously pawing the ground. Garonwy, with the assistance of his servants and the greyhounds, contrived to coop them up in a corner of the hills, where perpendicular rocks prevented their escape.

“Already had he captured three of the most beautiful little fellows in the world, which he expected to sell for £4 or £5 each at the next Bala fair, to him a considerable sum, and amounting to a fourth of the annual rent which he paid for his sheep walk. There remained, however, one most untamable creature, whose crested mane, and flowing tail, and wild eye, and distended nostril showed that he was a perfect Bucephalus of the hills; nor, indeed, was it safe to attack him in the ordinary way. Many of the three year olds had been known to break the legs of their pursuers, and some had been dismounted and trampled to death.

“Garonwy was determined to give the noble fellow a chase over the hills, and so overcome him by fatigue before the lasso was flung. The dogs were unslipped, and off they went swift as the winds, Garonwy following, and the two assistants posted in a neighbouring eminence. Vain was the effort to tire the merlin. Hugo, naturally impatient, and without waiting to ascertain that the coils were all

clear, flung the lasso over the head of the wild horse. The extremity of the cord was twisted round his own body, and tightening as the animal struggled, the compression became insupportable, and at length, in spite of every effort to disengage himself, Garonwy was dragged from his horse.

“The affrighted merlin, finding himself manacled by the rope, darted off with all the speed of which he was capable, dragging poor Garonwy over the rocky ground and stunted brushwood. This occurred at some distance from the men. They called in their dogs that the speed of the merlin might not be increased; but ere they could arrive at the spot at which the accident happened, the horse and the man had vanished. Whether the sufferings of the hunter were protracted, or he was dashed against a rock at the commencement of the horrible race, was never known; but the wild animal, frenzied and blinded by terror, rushed over a beetling cliff, at a considerable distance, overhanging the sea-shore, and the hunter and the horse were found at the bottom, a misshapen semblance of what they had been when living.”





CHAPTER II.

PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE HORSE—SAGACITY, FIDELITY,
SOCIABILITY, &c.; ANECDOTES—INSANITY.

THE physiognomy of the horse is an interesting subject. Those who have made it their study can read the animal's passions and purposes in his face. The following hints on this topic are chiefly from Professor Youatt :—

The eye enables us with tolerable accuracy to guess at the animal's temper. If much of the white is seen, he is not to be lightly trusted. The mischievous horse is always slyly on the look out for opportunities to indulge his malice, and the frequent backward direction of the eye, which makes the white most perceptible, is only to give surer effects to the blow which he is about to aim.

The quality of the horse's vision differs from that

of man. The former can take in a wider range in consequence of the lateral position of the eyes and their distance apart; and when the animal, with its head down, is quietly grazing, it can see objects with facility in every direction round it. Man's vision is more limited in range, but it is probable more acute, because the black lining of the human eye renders it a more perfect camera obscura, and gives more vividness to the pictures formed within it. The lining membrane of the horse's eye is of a beautiful sea green colour, in consequence of which it absorbs so much the less light, and thereby affords increased power of vision in the night. Every rider must be aware from experience that his horse can discern surrounding objects, when the gloom of evening conceals them from his own eyesight. All animals who have to seek their food by night have the interior of the eye more or less bright; in the wolf and the dog it is grey; and in all varieties of the cat species it is yellow; the eyes of the lion have been compared to two flaming torches in the night. There are individuals of the human race called Albinos, whose eyes look red like those of ferrets, from the absence of the usual black pigment, and these persons are almost blind by day, but see with ease in what to other men seems thick darkness.

“Many persons erroneously suppose that the flow of tears, caused by bodily pain or emotions of the mind, is peculiar to man. But Shakspeare says of the wounded stag :—

• “The big round tears
Coursed one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase;”

and horses are repeatedly seen to weep under acute pain or brutal usage. Mr. Lawrence, speaking of the cruelty exercised by some dealers in what they call “firing” a horse before he is led out for sale, in order to rouse every spark of mettle, says, “More than fifty years have passed away, and I have before my eyes a poor mare stone blind, exquisitely shaped, and showing all the marks of high blood, whom I saw unmercifully cut with the whip a quarter of an hour before the sale, to bring her to the use of her stiffened limbs, *while the tears were trickling down her cheeks.*”

The size, setting on, and motion of the ear, are important points. Ears rather small than large, placed not too far apart, erect and quick in motion, indicate both breeding and spirit; and if a horse is in the frequent habit of carrying one ear forward, and the other backward, and especially if he does so on a journey, he will generally possess both spirit

and continuance. The stretching of the ears in contrary directions shows that he is attentive to every thing that is passing round him; and while he is doing this he cannot be much fatigued, or likely soon to become so. It has been remarked, that few horses sleep without pointing one ear forward and the other backward, in order that they may receive notice of the approach of objects in every direction. When horses or mules march in company at night, those in front direct their ears forward, those in the rear direct them backward, and those in the centre turn them laterally or across; the whole troop seeming thus to be actuated by one feeling which watches the general safety.

The ear of the horse is one of the most beautiful parts about him, and by few things is the temper more surely indicated than by its motion. The ear is more intelligible even than the eye; and a person accustomed to the horse can tell, by the expressive motion of that organ, almost all that he thinks or means. When a horse lays his ears flat back on his neck, he most assuredly is meditating mischief, and the stander by should beware of his heels or his teeth. In play the ears will be laid back, but not so decidedly or so long. A quick change in their position, and more particularly the expression of the eye at

the time, will distinguish between playfulness and vice.

The hearing of the horse is remarkably acute. A thousand vibrations of the air, too slight to make any impression on the human ear, are readily perceived by him. It is well known to every hunting man, that the cry of hounds will be recognised by the horse, and his ears will be erect, and he will be all spirit and impatience, a considerable time before the rider is conscious of the least sound. Need any thing more be said to expose the absurdity of *cropping*? The cruel and stupid custom of cutting off the ears of the horse began (to its shame be it said!) in Great Britain, and was so obstinately pursued for many years, that, at length, it became hereditary in some cases, and a breed of horses born without ears was produced. Fortunately for this too often abused animal, cropping is not now the fashion. The practice of lopping off two-thirds of the tail, is more excusable, on the ground of convenience to the rider. In wet weather and miry roads, the switching of a long drabbled swab is not desirable. The question of long tails or short tails, is a question between comfort and beauty of form. Now, much as we may value the former, we think it ought not quite to overbear all consideration for the latter; and we are

glad to see that in this instance, too, fashion is beginning to side with reason and good taste.

The lips of the horse are his hands; they serve both as organs of touch and as instruments of prehension, as may be seen when the animal is feeding. He gathers up his corn with them, and collects the grass into a tuft before he bites it. The lips should be thin, but firm and regularly closed. Flabby, pendulous lips indicate weakness or old age, or dulness and sluggishness.

It is thought, perhaps, with some degree of truth, that indications of character may be drawn from the shape of the nose: but the rules in this case are the reverse of those applicable in judging of human noses; for, in the horse, the prominent Roman nose bespeaks an easy, good-tempered kind of beast, but rather of a plebeian order of mind and body; the horse with a straight, or Grecian nose, may be good or bad tempered, but not often either to any great excess; but a hollow nose (a cocked one, as we should say, in speaking of the human face) generally indicates some breeding, especially if the head is small, but occasionally accompanied by a vicious, uncontrollable disposition. "There is another way, however," says Mr. Youatt, "in which the nasal bones do more certainly indicate the breed; viz., by their comparative

length or shortness. There is no surer criterion of a well-bred horse than a broad, angular forehead, prominent features, and a short face; nor of a horse with little breeding than a narrow forehead, small features, and lengthened nose. The comparative development of the head and face indicates, with little error, the preponderance of the animal or intellectual principle."

As the horse breathes only through the nose, it is important that the openings into that cavity should be free, and capable of dilating sufficiently to allow of the passage of a large volume of air when the animal is put to his speed. The expanded nostril is a striking feature in the blood horse, especially when he has been excited and not overblown. What a sudden effect is given to the countenance of the hunter, when his ears become erect, and his nostrils dilate, as he first listens to the cry of the hounds, and snorts and scents them afar off! And the war-horse—"the glory of his nostrils is terrible!"

The following anecdote, related by Professor Kügler, of Halle, proves both the sagacity and the fidelity of the horse:—A friend of his, riding home through a wood on a dark night, struck his head against a branch of a tree, and fell stunned to the ground. The horse immediately returned to the

house they had left, and which was now closed, for the family had gone to bed. He pawed at the door until some one rose and opened it, and then he turned about; and the man, wondering at the affair, followed him. The faithful and intelligent animal led him to the place where his master lay senseless. A still more interesting incident, of a similar kind, occurred in this country:—A little girl, the daughter of a gentleman in Warwickshire, playing on the banks of a canal which runs through his grounds, fell into the water, and would in all probability have been drowned, had not a small pony, which had long been kept in the family, plunged into the stream, and brought the child safely to land.

Mr. Jesse gives an instance of what may fairly be called the sensibility of the horse, and his keen perception of danger. A friend of his was riding a horse one day in India, attended by a spaniel which had long been its companion. The dog ran into some long grass, and came out crying and shaking its head; the horse, contrary to his usual custom, not only avoided the dog, but showed the utmost dread of his coming near him. The dog soon died, and upon examination it was found that he had been bitten in the tongue by a venomous snake.

But the horse's sensibility is not a selfish quality;

he often displays the most generous solicitude, to avoid injuring other creatures. It is not an uncommon thing for a fallen soldier to escape without one touch of a hoof, though a charge of cavalry pass over his prostrate body, every animal in the line leaping clear over him. An old horse belonging to a carter in Strathnegie, Fifeshire, had become particularly familiar with the ways of children, for his master had a large family. One day, as this animal was dragging a loaded cart through a narrow lane near the village, a young child happened to be sprawling in the road, and would inevitably have been crushed by the wheels, if the sagacious old horse had not prevented it. He carefully took up the child by the clothes with his teeth, carried it for a few yards, and then placed it on a bank by the wayside, moving slowly all the while, and looking back as if to satisfy himself that the wheels of the cart had cleared it.

Gregarious in the wild state, the horse retains the same sociable disposition in domestication, and shows a great aversion to be left alone. This companionable temper appears very pleasingly in the field, in the gambolings of horses with each other, in their manifest curiosity when a strange horse comes in sight, and the animated gestures and neighings with which they try to strike up an acquaintance, and,

above all, in the little kind offices they perform mutually. It is an every-day occurrence to see two horses gently scratching each other; and Mr. Jesse speaks of it as a well-known fact, that in hot countries where the blood of the horses is heated by the climate, they are in the constant habit of bleeding each other, and sometimes of bleeding themselves, by biting the neck or the shoulder. So strong is the horse's aptitude for friendship, that he will attach himself to almost any kind of animal rather than remain solitary. White, of Selborne, relates an instance of this kind between a horse and a hen. These two incongruous animals spent much of their time together in a lonely orchard, where they saw no creature but each other, and by degrees an apparent regard sprang up between them. The fowl would approach the quadruped with notes of complacency, rubbing herself quietly against his legs, whilst the horse would look down with satisfaction, and move with the greatest caution and circumspection lest he should trample on his diminutive companion. In the portrait of the celebrated Godolphin Arabian is seen a cat, which was his inseparable companion in the stable, and died really broken hearted for his loss. Another race-horse and cat were great friends, and the latter generally slept in the manger. When the

horse was going to have his oats, he always took up the cat by the skin of her neck, and dropped her into the next stall, that she might not be in his way while he was feeding. At all other times he seemed pleased to have her near him. Eclipse was fond of a sheep, and Chillaby, called from his great ferocity, the Mad Arabian, whom only one of the grooms dared to approach, and who savagely tore to pieces the image of a man purposely placed in his way, had his peculiar attachment to a lamb that used to spend many an hour in butting away the flies from his friend.

“A gentleman of Bristol had a greyhound, which slept in the stable along with a very fine hunter of about five years of age. These animals became mutually attached, and regarded each other with the most tender affection. The greyhound always lay under the manger beside the horse, which was so fond of him, that he became unhappy and restless when the dog was out of his sight. It was a common practice with the gentleman to whom they belonged, to call at the stable for the greyhound to accompany him in his walks: on such occasions the horse would look over his shoulder at the dog with much anxiety, and neigh in a manner which plainly said—‘Let me also accompany you.’ When the dog returned to the stable, he was always welcomed by a loud neigh—he

ran up to the horse and licked his nose ; in return, the horse would scratch the dog's back with his teeth. One day, when the groom was out with the horse and greyhound for exercise, a large dog attacked the latter, and quickly bore him to the ground ; on which the horse threw back his ears, and, in spite of all the efforts of the groom, rushed at the strange dog that ~~was~~ worrying at the greyhound, seized him by the back with his teeth, which speedily made him quit his hold, and shook him till a large piece of the skin gave way. The offender no sooner got on his feet, than he judged it prudent to beat a precipitate retreat from so formidable an opponent."

Another instance of attachment between a horse and a dog is related by Capt. Brown in his "Biographical Sketches:" "My friend, Dr. Smith, of the Queen's County Militia, Ireland, had a beautiful hackney, which, although extremely spirited, was at the same time wonderfully docile. He had also a fine Newfoundland dog, named Cæsar. These animals were mutually attached, and seemed perfectly acquainted with each other's actions. The dog was always kept in the stable at night, and uniformly lay beside the horse. When Dr. Smith practised in Dublin, he visited his patients on horseback, and had no other servant to take care of the horse, while in

their houses, but Cæsar, to whom he gave the reins in his mouth. The horse stood very quietly, even in that crowded city, beside his friend Cæsar. When it happened that the doctor had a patient not far distant from the place where he paid his last visit, he did not think it worth while to remount, but called to his horse and Cæsar. They both instantly obeyed, and remained quietly opposite the door where he entered, until he came out again. While he remained in Maryborough, Queen's County, where I commanded a detachment, I had many opportunities of witnessing the friendship and sagacity of these intelligent animals. The horse seemed to be as implicitly obedient to his friend Cæsar as he could possibly be to his groom. The doctor would go to the stable, accompanied by his dog, put the bridle upon his horse, and giving the reins to Cæsar, bid him take the horse to the water. They both understood what was to be done, when off trotted Cæsar, followed by the horse, which frisked, capered, and played with the dog all the way to the rivulet, about three hundred yards distant from the stable. We followed at a great distance, always keeping as far off as possible, so that we could observe their manœuvres. They invariably went to the stream, and after the horse had quenched his thirst,

both returned in the same playful manner as they had gone out.

“The doctor frequently desired Cæsar to make the horse leap over this stream, which might be about six feet broad. The dog, by a kind of bark, and leaping up towards the horse’s head, intimated to him what he wanted, which was quickly understood; and he cantered off, preceded by Cæsar, and took the leap in a neat and regular style. The dog was then desired to bring him back again, and it was speedily done in the same manner. On one occasion Cæsar lost hold of the reins, and as soon as the horse cleared the leap, he immediately trotted up to his canine guide, who took hold of the bridle, and led him through the water quietly.”

“A gentleman,” says Mr. Jesse, “who resides near Southampton, had a retriever, a large half-bred Newfoundland dog, that had formed a friendship with a horse, which, at the time I am referring to, was turned out into a paddock near the house. The dog, hunting one day by himself, was caught in a snare by the leg, and after struggling some time, during which its cries were heard, he disengaged himself so far from his confinement as to break the string of the snare, the wire being still attached to the limb. In this

situation he was observed by my friend and his host to go to the horse in the paddock, and seemed at once to make him aware of his distress. The horse gently put his nose down to the dog, and the dog having licked it, lifted up the leg to which the snare was attached in a manner which could not be mistaken. The horse immediately began to try to disengage the snare, by applying his teeth to it in a gentle and cautious manner, although he was unable to succeed in removing it. This is by no means a solitary instance of the sympathy which animals show for each other when in distress."

Man may fully avail himself of this amiable disposition of the horse; it is rarely the latter's fault if he and his owner are not on the best possible terms. How often has the horse been found grazing by the side of his drunken prostrate master, whom he would not leave. "We have seen," says Mr. Blaine, "a child of five years old purposely sent by the wife of the coachman to quiet an unruly and noisy coach-horse, for to no other person would he yield such obedience; but a pat from her tiny hand, or her infantile inquiry—'What is the matter with you?' was sufficient to allay every obstreperous symptom. But it was to her only he yielded such submission, for otherwise he was a high-spirited and really intractable animal. Often

has this child been found lying asleep on the neck of the horse, when he had laid himself down in his stall, and so long as she continued to sleep, so long the horse invariably remained in his recumbent position."

There is something almost mysterious in the manner in which the horse contrives to pick his way in safety through dangerous and deceitful ground, and to discover and avoid perils of which his master is quite unsuspecting. In all doubtful cases the animal's head should be left free, that he may put his nose to the ground, and examine it by touch, as well as by sight and hearing (the muzzle is the peculiar organ of touch in the horse), and he will then seldom fail to judge promptly and unerringly whether or not he may venture to proceed. But even when the animal is confined in harness and restrained from the free use of all his faculties, he sometimes exercises his wonderful instinct in the happiest manner. In the very month in which we are writing (January, 1846), several hundred feet of the viaduct of Barentin over the Rouen and Havre railway came down with a sudden crash. Just before the fall, Monsieur Lorgery, flour merchant of Pavilly, was about to cross one of the arches in his cabriolet, when the horse stopped short and refused to pass. M. Lorgery struck the animal with his whip, but all in vain—he refused to stir. At

the moment while his unsuspecting driver was still urging him on, the fall took place.

It is partly owing to the faculty of discerning the obscurest traces of a frequented, or at least a practicable road, and partly to that tenacious power of memory which enables a horse to recognise a road he has once traversed, that bewildered travellers, from the days of knight-errantry downwards, have found it good policy to throw the reins on their steed's neck, and trust themselves implicitly to his guidance. Along with this retentive memory the horse combines a very business-like observance of habit and routine. The author of "The Menageries" knew a horse which, being accustomed to make a journey once a week with the newsman of a provincial paper, always stopped at the houses of the several customers, although they were sixty or seventy in number. But further, there were two persons in the route who took one paper between them, and each claimed the privilege of receiving it first on the alternate Sunday. The horse soon became accustomed to this regulation; although the parties lived two miles asunder, he stopped once a fortnight at the door of the half-customer at Thorpe, and once a fortnight at that of the half-customer at Chertsey; and never did he forget this arrangement, which lasted several years,

or stop unnecessarily after he had once thoroughly understood the rule.

The docility and intelligence of the horse are abundantly shown in the feats he is trained to perform in the Circus; but those which he is self-taught are still more interesting. Lord Brougham in his "Dissertations" says, he knew a pony that used to open the latch of the stable door, and also raise the lid of the corn chest; and he notices the instance of a horse opening the wicket-gate of a field by pressing down the upright bar, as a man would do,—“actions,” he observes, “which the animals must have learned from observation, as it is very unlikely that they were taught.” Such feats are not uncommon; but the following is, we believe, unique. In 1794, a gentleman in Leeds had a horse which, after having been kept up in the stable for some time, and turned out into a field where there was a pump well supplied with water, regularly obtained a quantity therefrom by his own dexterity. For this purpose, the animal was observed to take the handle into his mouth, and work it with his head, in a way exactly similar to that done by the hand of man, until a sufficiency was procured.

The force of habit is particularly strong in the old hunter and in the war-horse. The Tyrolese,

in one of their insurrections in 1809, took fifteen Bavarian horses, and mounted them with fifteen of their own men; but in a skirmish with a squadron of the same regiment, no sooner did these horses hear the trumpet and recognise the uniform of their old masters, than they set off at full gallop, and carried their riders, in spite of all their efforts, into the Bavarian ranks, where they were made prisoners. But inveterate habits are contracted in peace as well as in war, *domi militiæque*, a truth which was curiously exemplified in a case that fell under our own observation. Some ladies of our acquaintance in Essex bought a very respectable, middle aged, black-coated horse, to draw their four-wheeled open chaise, driven by their own fair hands. At first they were greatly pleased with their bargain; the horse was as strong as an elephant, as gentle as a lamb, and as sedate as a parish clerk. But he soon gave proof of very ungenteel propensities. No sooner did a public house come in view than he would rush up to the door, in defiance of whip and rein, and persist in remaining there a reasonable drinking time, thereby exposing the reputation of his mistresses to very shocking surmises. It afterwards came out that he had learned these ways of a jolly old farmer in whose possession he had been for some years.

There is a story told of a famous trotter belonging to a butcher, which attracted the admiration of a gentleman by its splendid action, and was bought by him at a very high price. But no long time elapsed before the purchaser came to the conclusion that he had been taken in; the horse was decidedly a dull, lazy brute; it was all over with his fine trotting; and the butcher who sold him was, no doubt, aware that the animal laboured under some unsoundness that destroyed his former high qualities. The gentleman took the horse to its former owner, and indignantly denounced the fraud that had been practised upon him. The butcher listened in silence to the stormy harangue, and then turning to one of his men, who was leaving the shop with a tray of meat on his shoulder, he said to him, "Here, Dick, jump up, just as you are, and let us see if the horse can't trot a bit." The man did so, and off started the horse in the very best style. The gentleman was amazed and confounded; "I can never make him go like that!" he said. "That's a pity, sir," replied the butcher; "you see it is not his fault. But I'll tell you what it is; you just please to mount, and *let me put a tray of meat on the saddle before you*, and then I warrant you'll say he goes fast enough!"

Horses often exhibit a good deal of cunning.

The late General Pater, of the East India service, was a remarkably fat man. While stationed at Madras, he purchased a charger, which, after a short trial, all at once betook himself to a trick of lying down whenever he prepared to get upon his back. Every expedient was tried, without success, to cure him of the trick; and the laugh was so much indulged against the general's corpulency, that he found it convenient to dispose of his horse to a young officer quitting the settlement for a distant station up the country. Upwards of two years had subsequently elapsed, when, in the execution of his official duties, General Pater left Madras to inspect one of the frontier cantonments. He travelled, as is the usual custom in India, in his palanqueen (a covered couch carried on men's shoulders). The morning after his arrival at the station, the troops were drawn out; and, as he had brought no horses, it was proper to provide for his being suitably mounted, though it was not very easy to find a charger adapted to his weight. At length an officer resigned to him a powerful horse for the occasion, which was brought out duly caparisoned in front of the line. The general came forth from his tent, and proceeded to mount; but the instant the horse saw him advance, he flung himself flat upon the sand, and neither blows

nor entreaties could induce him to rise. It was the general's old charger, which, from the moment of quitting his service, had never once practised the artifice until this second meeting. The general, who was an exceedingly good-humoured man, joined heartily in the universal shout that ran through the whole line on witnessing this ludicrous affair.

Courage is a quality of great importance in a horse, and some possess it in a high degree. It is worthy, too, of remark, that there is often something more than mere natural indifference to danger, something of an intellectual character in the courage of the horse. He *learns* to overcome his fears. At the sight of a tiger a horse has been known to become wholly paralysed with terror, and incapable of resistance, or even of flight; and yet this instinctive dread of mortal foes can be eradicated by education, and a reliance on the protection of man. A remarkable proof of this is, that the hunting leopard is allowed by the well-trained horse to spring on his back, either behind or before his master, when he goes a-field in pursuit of game. One of the most signal instances of courage on the part of horse and rider, and of perfect concert between both, is that recorded of the late Sir Robert Gillespie and his Arab. Sir Robert being present on the race-course

of Calcutta during one of the great Hindoo festivals, when many thousands are assembled to witness all sorts of shows, was suddenly alarmed by the shrieks and commotion of the crowd. On being informed that a tiger had escaped from his keepers, he immediately called for his horse, and, with no other weapon than a boar-spear snatched from one of the bystanders, he rode to attack this formidable enemy. The tiger was probably amazed at finding himself in the middle of such a number of shrieking beings flying from him in all directions; but the moment he perceived Sir Robert, he crouched in the attitude of preparing to spring upon him; and that instant the gallant soldier passed his horse in a leap over the tiger's back, and struck the spear through his spine. It was a feat requiring the utmost conceivable unity of purpose and movement on the part of horse and rider, almost realising for the moment the fable of the centaur. Had either swerved or wavered for a second, both had been lost. But the brave steed knew his rider. The animal was a small grey, and was afterwards sent home as a present to the Prince Regent.

Sir Robert fell subsequently at the storming of Kalunga. Another horse of his, a favourite black charger, bred at the Cape of Good Hope, and carried

by him to India, was, at the sale of his effects, competed for by several officers of his division, and finally knocked down to the privates of the 8th dragoons, who contributed their prize money, to the amount of £500 sterling, to retain this commemoration of their late commander. The charger was always led at the head of the regiment on a march, and at the station of Cawnpore was usually indulged with taking his ancient post at the colour stand, where the salute of passing squadrons was given at drill and on reviews. When the regiment was ordered home, the funds of the privates running low, he was bought for the same sum by a gentleman, who provided funds and a paddock for him, where he might end his days in comfort; but when the corps had marched, and the sound of the trumpet had departed, he refused to eat, and on the first opportunity, being led out to exercise, he broke from his groom, and galloping to his ancient station on the parade, after neighing aloud, dropped down and died.

It is not surprising that an animal endowed in so high a degree as the horse is with mental and moral faculties, should occasionally be subject, like man, to derangement of these faculties. The disordered actions, the fury, the caprices, and the vices which are sometimes shown by the brute, are in the highest

degree analagous to certain forms of human insanity. The following anecdotes are related by Mr. Youatt, on the authority of Professor Rodet, of Toulouse :—

A horse, seven years old, was remarkable for an habitual air of stupidity, and a peculiar wandering expression of countenance. When he saw any thing he had not been accustomed to, or heard any sudden or unusual noise, whether it was near or at a distance, or sometimes when his corn was thrown into the manger without the precaution of speaking to him or patting him, he was frightened to an almost incredible degree; he recoiled precipitately, every limb trembled, and he struggled violently to escape. After several useless efforts to get away, he would work himself into the very highest degree of rage so that it was dangerous to approach him. This state of excitement was followed by dreadful convulsions, which did not cease until he had broken his halter, or otherwise freed himself from his trammels. He would then become calm, and suffer himself to be led back to his stable, nor would any thing more be seen but an almost continual uneasiness, and a wandering and stupid expression of countenance. He had belonged to a brutal soldier, who had beaten him shamefully: but before he fell into that man's hands he had been perfectly quiet and tractable.

A Piedmontese officer possessed a beautiful mare, and one that would have been in all respects serviceable, but for a peculiarity that rendered her exceedingly dangerous: that was a decided aversion to paper, which she recognised the moment she saw it, and even in the dark, if two leaves were rubbed together. The effect produced by the sight or sound of it was so prompt and violent, that she several times unhorsed her rider. She had not the slightest fear of objects that would terrify most horses. She regarded not the music of the band, the whistling of the balls, the roaring of the cannon, the fires of the bivouacs, or the glittering of arms. The confusion and noise of an engagement made no impression on her; the sight of no other white object offended her. No other sound moved her, but the view or the rustling of paper roused her to madness.

A mare was perfectly manageable, and betrayed no antipathy to human beings, to animals of other kinds, or to horses, except they were of a light grey colour; but the moment she saw a light grey horse she rushed towards it and attacked it with the greatest fury. It was the same at all times and everywhere. She was all that could be wished on the parade, on the route, in the ranks, in action, and in the stable; but if she once caught a glimpse of a grey or white

horse she rested not until she had thrown her rider or broken her halter, and then she rushed on the object of her dislike with the utmost fury. She generally contrived to seize the animal by the head or throat, and held him so fast that she would suffocate him, if he were not promptly released from her bite.

Another mare exhibited no dread except of white inanimate objects, as white mantles or coats, and particularly white plumes. She would fly from them if she could; but if unable to accomplish this, she would rush fiercely upon them, strike at them with her forefeet, and tear them with her teeth.

One of these horses, the second, was by long and kind attention divested of its insane terror, and became perfectly quiet and useful; but the other three bid defiance to all means of cure, and to coercion amongst the rest. The cases of all four were as decided instances of monomania, or insanity confined to one object, as ever were exhibited in the human being.





CHAPTER III.

VICES, AND DISAGREEABLE OR DANGEROUS HABITS.

IN the last chapter we gave instances of mischievous propensities directed only against certain kinds of objects, and displaying all the characters of what is called monomania. These are rare cases ; but it is not uncommon to find horses, whom no jury would pronounce insane, but who are addicted to the worst and most malevolent practices, such as kicking, biting, and plunging without provocation, or to shying and starting from mere wantonness, to the great danger and annoyance of their riders. These and other vices are partly the effect of a naturally bad temper, and partly of bad education. Horses, for instance, that are teased by the thoughtless play of grooms and stable boys, will

begin by pretending to bite or kick their tormentors; by-and-by they will do so in earnest, and at last the habit will be permanently confirmed. Almost all veterinary surgeons are agreed in considering it hopeless to attempt the cure of these vices when once established. Professor Stewart says, "I have seen biters punished until they trembled in every joint and were ready to drop, but have never in any case known them to be cured by this treatment, or by any other. The lash is forgotten in an hour, and the horse is as ready and determined to repeat the offence as before. He appears unable to resist the temptation, and in its worst form biting is a species of insanity." But, according to Burckhardt, the traveller, there is a method known to the Egyptian soldiery for curing the propensity to bite, and practised by them with unfailing success. They roast a leg of mutton, take it hot from the fire, and present it to the offending animal. He plunges his teeth in it, they stick fast in the hot meat, and the pain he endures makes him careful for the future to bite at nothing but his lawful food. Mr. Morier mentions a singular method he saw practised in Persia to subdue the temper of a very vicious horse that had resisted every other kind of treatment. The horse was muzzled, and turned loose in an enclosure, there to await the attack of two

horses whose mouths and limbs were at liberty, and which were turned in to attack him. So effectually did this discipline operate that he became completely altered, and as remarkable for docility as he had previously been for savage obstinacy.

It is related, we know not on what authority, that a novel kind of jockeyship was once tried with triumphant success in one of those cases we are here speaking of. A well-known nobleman, so runs the tale, had a wild horse which nobody could ride. "I know not what your lordship can do with him," said some one, "but to set the monkey on his back." So they put a pad on the horse, and clapped the monkey upon it with a switch in his hand, wherewith he belaboured the horse, and set him into a furious kicking and galloping, but pug still kept his seat. The horse lay down on the ground; but when he threw himself on one side, the monkey was upon the other. He ran into a wood to brush his rider off; but the monkey dodged from side to side so as to avoid every tree and bush, until at last the horse was so sickened and fatigued and broken spirited, that he ran home to the stable for protection. When the monkey was removed, a boy was put in his place, and managed the horse with ease. The animal never gave any trouble afterwards.

Old books of farriery mention a plan for taming intractable horses, which, we believe, has gone out of fashion only on account of the trouble attending it. We should be glad to see it revived, for we are inclined to think it would be attended with very good results. The horse was tethered in his stall, with his tail to the manger, prevented from lying down and kept without food or sleep for forty-eight hours or more ; men, who relieved each other by turns, being stationed at his head to rouse him whenever he began to dose. This method was the same in principle as that by which falconers used to tame their hawks ; and there can be little doubt that the discipline which could subdue those savage and impetuous birds, would have been no less efficacious in bringing down the unruly temper of the more generous quadruped.

We have now to speak of certain horse-taming exploits, which have in them a strong tincture of the marvellous, but which are, nevertheless, authenticated by undeniable evidence.

At the Spring meeting of 1804, Mr, Whalley's horse, King Pippin, was brought on the Curragh of Kildare to run. He was a horse of the most strangely savage and vicious disposition. His particular propensity was that of flying at and worrying any person who came within his reach ; and, if he had an oppor-

tunity, he would turn his head round, seize his rider by the leg with his teeth, and drag him down from his back. For this reason he was always ridden with what is called a *sword*; this is a strong flat stick, having one end attached to the check of the bridle, and the other to the girth of the saddle—a contrivance to prevent a horse of this kind from getting at his rider.

King Pippin had long been difficult to manage, and dangerous to go near; but on the occasion in question, he could not be got to run at all: nobody could put the bridle on his head. There was a large concourse of people assembled on the Curragh; and one countryman, more fearless than the rest of the lookers on, volunteered his services to bridle the horse. No sooner had he commenced operations, than King Pippin seized him somewhere about the shoulders, and shook him as a dog does a rat. Fortunately for the poor fellow his body was very thickly covered with clothes, for on such holiday occasions an Irishman of his class is fond of displaying his wardrobe, and if he has three coats in the world, he is sure to put them all on. Owing to this circumstance, the horse never fairly got hold of his skin, and the man escaped with little injury, except the rent and ruined condition of his holiday attire.

The WHISPERER was now sent for. This mysterious horse-tamer soon arrived, was shut up with the horse all night, and in the morning exhibited the hitherto ferocious animal following him about the course like a dog—lying down at his command—suffering his mouth to be opened, and any person's hand to be introduced into it—in short, as quiet almost as a sheep. He came out the same meeting and won his race, and his docility continued satisfactory for a considerable period; but at the end of three years his vice returned, and then he is said to have killed a man, for which he was destroyed.

The man who effected the wonder we have just recounted was an awkward, ignorant rustic of the lowest class, of the name of Sullivan, but better known by the appellation of the Whisperer. His occupation was horse-breaking. The nickname he acquired from the vulgar notion of his being able to communicate to the animal what he wished by means of a whisper; and the singularity of his method seemed in some degree to justify the supposition. How his art was acquired, or in what it consisted, he never disclosed. He died about 1810. His son, who followed him in the same trade, possessed but a small portion of the art, having either never learned the true secret, or being incapable of putting it into practice.

The wonder of his skill consisted in the celerity of the operation, which was performed in privacy, without any apparent means of coercion: every description of horse or even mule, whether previously broken or unhandled, whatever their peculiar habits or vices might have been, submitted without a show of resistance to his magical influence, and in the short space of an hour became gentle and tractable. This effect, though instantaneously produced, was generally durable. Though more submissive to him than to others, the animals seemed to have acquired a docility unknown before.

When sent for to tame a vicious beast, for which he was either paid according to the distance, or generally two or three guineas, he directed the stable, in which he and the object of the experiment were, to be shut, with orders not to open the door until a signal was given. After a *tête-à-tête* of about half an hour, during which little or no bustle was heard, the signal was made, and upon opening the door, the horse appeared lying down, and the man by his side playing with him like a child with a puppy dog. From that time he was found perfectly willing to submit to any discipline, however repugnant to his nature before.

Mr. Croker, to whom we are indebted for this

account, once saw this man's skill tried on a horse which could never before be brought to stand still for a smith to shoe him. "The day after Sullivan's half hour's lecture," he says, "I went, not without some incredulity, to the smith's shop, with many other curious spectators, where we were witnesses of the complete success of his art. This, too, had been a troop horse, and it was supposed, not without reason, that after regimental discipline had failed, no other would be found availing. I observed that the animal appeared terrified whenever Sullivan either spoke to or looked at him: how that extraordinary ascendancy could have been obtained it is difficult to conjecture.

"In common cases this mysterious preparation was unnecessary. He seemed to possess an instinctive power of inspiring awe, the result, perhaps, of natural intrepidity, in which, I believe, a great part of his art consisted: though the circumstance of the *tête-à-tête* shows that, on particular occasions, something more must have been added to it. A faculty like this would in some hands have made a fortune, and I understand that great offers were made to him for the exercise of his art abroad. But hunting was his passion: he lived at home in the style most agreeable to his disposition, and nothing could induce him to quit Duhallow and the fox-hounds."

We have been told by a merchant long resident in Mexico, that it is a common practice in that country to tame the most violent horses by a very simple but singular method, namely, by putting the horse's nostrils under a man's armpit. Our informant assures us that the most refractory brute instantly becomes tractable on inhaling the odour of the human body. This strange statement is corroborated by a fact first made known by Mr. Catlin, and both together may perhaps afford a clue to the mystery of the Whisperer's proceedings. Mr. Catlin tells us, that when an Indian of the Rocky Mountains runs down and nooses a wild horse, one of his first steps is to place his hand over the eyes of the struggling animal, and breathe into its nostrils, when it soon becomes docile, and is so completely conquered that it submits quietly ever after.

Mr. Ellis, a gentleman of Cambridge, happened to read Mr. Catlin's statement, and felt a natural desire to ascertain how far this mode of horse-taming might be employed among British horses. He tried the experiment on a filly not a year old, that had been removed from her dam three months before, and since that time had not been out of the stable; he tried it, too, under manifest disadvantage, for the filly, which was quite wild, was in the open air, with

several strangers about her, and both the owner and the amateur were rather seeking amusement from the failure, than knowledge from the success, of their experiment. It was with great difficulty Mr. Ellis managed to cover the eyes of the restive and frightened animal. At length he succeeded, and *blew* into her nostrils. No particular effect seemed to follow. He then *breathed* into her nostrils, and the moment he did so the filly at once desisted from her violent struggles, stood still and trembled. From that time she became very tractable. Another gentleman also breathed into her nostrils, and she evidently enjoyed it, and kept putting up her nose to receive the breath. On the following morning she was led out again. She was perfectly tractable, and it seemed to be almost impossible to frighten her.

Shying is a very troublesome vice, and is only to be overcome by a rider of great firmness and good temper. Blows will scarcely ever cure vicious habits originating in fear; they will only increase them, for the horse will be possessed with the dread of two evils instead of one; viz., the object itself from which he starts away, and the punishment that is to follow. Sometimes his shying is the consequence of defective sight; and then he must be taught to rely on his rider, and to learn from him that the object of his

terror is not at all formidable. The tone of the voice, half chiding, half encouraging, and a gentle pressure of the heel, will be perfectly understood by the animal, and he will soon come to trust in his rider's judgment: on the other hand, if the latter show any symptoms of timidity, they will be instantly detected by the horse, and the mischief will be greatly aggravated. In other cases the vice proceeds from skittishness or affectation, and must be differently dealt with. "Horses," says Mr. Lawrence, "generally fix on some particular shying butt; for example, I recollect having, at different periods, three hacks, all very powerful: the one made choice of a windmill for the object or butt; the second a tilted wagon; and the third, a pig led in a string. It so happened, however, that I rode the two former when amiss from a violent cold; and they then paid no more attention to either windmills or tilted wagons, than to any other objects, convincing me that their shying, when in health and spirits, was pure affectation; an affectation however, which may be speedily united with obstinacy and vice. Let it be treated with marked displeasure, mingled with gentle but decided firmness, and the habit will be of short endurance."

Mr. Blaine once purchased a horse with an excellent character for steadiness, except that he was

always much alarmed at a passing carriage, whether it was coming towards or overtaking him. A tilted wagon or a stage-coach were such objects of dread as no power could get him to face. "We knew it would be in vain to oppose human physical force to brute fears, and that it was only by introducing favourable recollections derived from those very objects, greater in degree than the fears hitherto entertained of them, that we could conquer this dangerous propensity. We began by leading the horse, previously exercised and fasted, towards a cart filled with clover hay: the smell of the hay was irresistible, and soon dissipated all dread of the stationary cart; but when it was purposely moved gently onwards, he became rather discomposed; a little coaxing, however, induced him to follow it, and we had the pleasure, at this his first lesson, of seeing him proceed confidently with the cart round a farm-yard, and finally into the road. To vary the effect, after he had steadily walked by the side of the carriage a certain time, we restrained him so that it got ahead of him; when he again reached it, slight indications of fear appeared, as he had to make his way up to the side of the cart, for we had a coverlet purposely drawn over the back, that he might not reach the hay from behind. We next passed the cart altogether, but it was a few paces only, and then

turned him round to the other side of it; but his whole mind was so intent on the clover, that with the most trifling symptoms only of alarm, he fell to again on the hay, which finished lesson the first. Our next attempt was with a sieve, full of corn (presented to him on an empty stomach), which he could only reach from the tailboard of a tilted wagon—an awful object! After a few snortings and sniffings, here also hunger overcame his fears, and he munched the oats with great relish; but when the wagon was put in motion, his dread for a little time got the better of his appetite, and the flapping of the covering of the tilt appeared to him most portentous: his fears even in this case, however, soon gave place to confidence, through the skilfulness of a groom to whom he was much attached. This man mounted the wagon, and, resting on the tailboard, offered the oats to the horse, at the same time calling and encouraging him. This worked wonders; nor shall we readily forget the knucker of acknowledgment with which the confiding brute followed the groom's call as the wagon moved on, occasionally dipping his nose into the sieve. After a few more lessons of a similar kind, one or two of which were varied by giving him hay from the window of a stage-coach, he lost all fear of carriages, and his former owner would willingly have taken

him back at a very considerable increase of price."

The stomach was long ago discovered to be an excellent medium of education; its lessons, aided by habit, are infallible. Here is another example of this truth:— Mr. Grant, a merchant of London, asked a friend if he knew of a saddle nag for sale; the other replied, that he himself had one to dispose of, which he could recommend were it not for his unconquerable dread of swine, which rendered him dangerous either to ride or drive, and on which account alone he must part with him. Mr. Grant was not a person to be dismayed at trifles; and being convinced he could remedy this evil, he bought the horse, and set about its cure by purchasing a sow and a large litter of pigs. The horse, sow, and pigs were all turned together into a sort of barn stable, where they were never disturbed except to give them food. The snortings, kickings, squeakings, and gruntings were for two or three days, great and continual, and the consequence was, that three or four of the younglings were demolished; but gradually the uproar ceased, and in a fortnight's time the lady mother was to be seen under the belly of the horse, busily employed in searching for the grains of corn left in the straw, with her progeny as actively engaged around her. Well

might White, in his "Natural History of Selbourne," remark, that "interest makes strange friendships."

With respect to the proper mode of administering punishment in these cases, we will adduce another example from Mr. Blaine: "At Harlow Bush Fair we were struck with the appearance of a likely nag; but as we saw our salesman was evidently one of a suspicious order, we squared our expectations accordingly; and after having cheapened the nag to a very low price, considering his figure, we bought him, after such a trial as this sort of places afford, and this sort of persons allow. On the next day we mounted our purchase, and proceeded five or six miles on the Hertfordshire road, the horse performing well in all his paces, riding to a good mouth, and being apparently as tractable as one could wish. We were, however, still aware, that either he must have been stolen, or that, according to stable slang, 'a screw was loose' somewhere, which would soon jingle,—and a turnpike-gate was to unfold the secret; for this gate he would not go through, not from any fear of the gate itself, but from mere restiveness. We battled it with him for some time, but it was to no purpose, and we were too well acquainted with horses to push matters to extremities; for even had we forced him through at this time, he would, without doubt, have

repeated the same trick whenever the same spirit moved him. A radical cure was our object, and so we refrained from any further attempts to force him onwards, but, placing his head under the wall of the toll-house bar, we sat quietly on his back an hour. We then tried to pass him through the gate ; but as his determination appeared to remain in full force, we gave him another hour of stationary riding, during which he was evidently very uneasy and oppressed with the weight he carried, unrelieved as he was by any change of position or any locomotion. At the end of the second hour we believe we might have forced him through, as his resistances were now feeble ; but as they yet evidently existed, we gave him another half hour of waiting, and then he went through the gate as tractably as any horse could do. We did not let the matter rest here, but rode him fully ten or twelve miles further than we had intended, purposely to give him notice that implicit obedience would be exacted of him in future, on pain of a punishment not at all to his taste. He never afterwards showed the smallest disposition to rebel, although, as we learned subsequently, he had, several times before coming into our possession, been passed from hand to hand in the Rothings of Essex, as utterly incorrigible."



CHAPTER IV.

SPEED AND ENDURANCE—CARNIVOROUS HORSES—HORSE FLESH
AS FOOD—HORSE BAITING.

THE maximum speed of the racehorse appears to be at the rate of a mile in a minute; for few, if any, horses can retain the full velocity of this rate for even that time. A mile has, however, been run at Newmarket by a stop-watch in one minute and four and a half seconds. It is said, but was never proved, that Flying Childers did run at Newmarket one mile in the minute; certain it is that this celebrated horse, when carrying nine stone two pounds ran over the round course, which is three miles six furlongs and ninety-three yards, in six minutes and forty seconds. Bay Melton ran four miles at York, in 1763, in seven minutes forty-three seconds and a half. Eclipse also ran the same distance, on the same course, in eight minutes with twelve stone. The most extraordinary instance on

record of the stoutness as well as speed of the race-horse was displayed in 1786, when Mr. Huell's Quibbler ran twenty-three miles round the flat at Newmarket in fifty-seven minutes and ten seconds. The speed of the greyhound, and that of the hare, is but little inferior to that of the racehorse, but their powers of endurance at their utmost velocity are not equal to his.

The racing gallop is evidently but a succession of leaps, in which the forelegs and the hind-legs start in pairs, each pair acting simultaneously. The hand-gallop is not so rapid a movement, in it the right legs are a little in advance of their fellows. It is well ascertained that a horse can never pass at once from a state of rest into the gallop of full speed, but must begin with the hand-gallop; and cunning jockeys sometimes derive profit from this circumstance by wagering with the unwary, that no horse shall be found to gallop one hundred yards while a man runs fifty, the two starting together. In this case the man is sure to win the race, for the horse has not time enough to acquire the necessary momentum, as he would do if the race were for a hundred and fifty yards.

The following account of a fearful race between a steam engine and a mare is extracted from a number

of the Ipswich Express, for January, 1846 :—" An occurrence, approaching the wonderful in its nature, took place on the Colchester end of the Eastern Counties Railway, early on the morning of Sunday the 4th instant. A mare, the property of Mr. Gar-rad, whose farm adjoins the railway and its Colchester terminus, had obtained access to the line in the course of the night, and ran off in front of the engine when the mail train started from Colchester at a quarter before three o'clock. It being quite dark, the animal was not at first observed by the engine-driver; but after the train had proceeded a short distance, and a smart speed was attained, the mare was seen a head of the engine, between the up-line of rails, going along at a rate which seemed likely to test the power of the locomotive. The driver sounded the whistle, in the hope of frightening the maer from the line; but this only served to quicken her speed without diverting her course; on she went like the wind, with the engine and train puffing, clattering, and groaning in her rear: so desperate was her pace, that though the speed of the train had reached twenty-five miles an hour, the driver and stoker frequently lost sight of her in the gloom, and at first supposed the train had passed her, but ever and anon she was again caught sight of, still rushing along in

the course of the engine; and the screaming whistle, which was now blown repeatedly, acting on the terrified mare more powerfully than the combination of spur, whip, and voice, drove her madly forward far ahead of the iron monster. What would have been the issue of this strange race had it continued much longer it is not difficult to surmise; the mare's spirit was good, but what in the long run can flesh and blood do against the giant power of steam? As it was, she gallantly kept ahead for full five miles, when just as the flying pursuer reached the Mark's Tey bridge, the poor animal caught her foot against a stone or part of the rail, and rolled headlong on to the down-line. The engine, with a parting shriek and puff, passed on; and the mare was found, when daylight appeared, nothing the worse for her race and tumble, and in due time was restored to her owner."

It is not certain that a trotting speed of twenty miles an hour has ever been attained, but the distance has been done in six seconds over that time. Phenomenon, a mare belonging to Sir Edward Astley, when twelve years old, trotted seventeen miles in fifty-six minutes, and performed the same distance a month afterwards in less than fifty-three minutes; that is to say, at the rate of more than twenty-one and a

half miles per hour. The American horses are celebrated for their trotting. In general they are not ridden, but driven, and that in a peculiar manner. The driver leans back in his seat and keeps up a steady pull on the reins; as long as this continues the horse runs, but stops the moment the reins are relaxed. Tom Thumb, a celebrated American horse belonging to Mr. Osbaldeston, was matched in 1829 to perform the wonderful feat of trotting a hundred miles in harness in ten and a half successive hours. The vehicle did not weigh more than one hundred pounds, nor the driver more than ten stone three pounds. The gallant little horse, which was but fourteen hands high, completed the task in ten hours and seven minutes; twenty-three minutes within the allotted time, without being in the smallest degree distressed.

It used to be thought that no horse could in fair walking contend with a man, who was a first-rate pedestrian; but the opinion was refuted by the performance of a hackney named Sloven, that, in 1791, beat a celebrated pedestrian by walking twenty miles in three hours and forty-one minutes. Two years afterwards the same animal walked twenty-two miles in three hours and fifty-two minutes.

The preceding statements are sufficient to display

the absolute powers of the horse ; let us now consider what can be done by horse and man. Wonderful things are related of the Tartar couriers, who used to ride from one end of the Turkish empire to the other in an incredibly short space of time, with a pacha's head dangling at their saddle bow ; but we have had European couriers whose feats were not less astonishing and better authenticated. In the days when as yet railroads were not, government expresses that required great dispatch used to be carried by men on horseback, though ordinary messengers usually travelled in carriages. Relays of horses were kept ready for the courier all along the road ; a postilion accompanied him from station to station, and he continued his journey day and night without halting except to take a fresh horse. He ate and drank in the saddle, slept in the saddle, leaning forward on a cushion strapped to the high-peaked pommel, and was lifted, saddle and all, from the back of one horse to another's ; for the attempt to mount and dismount, after his heated limbs had been long fixed in one posture, would have speedily disabled him. The postilion who galloped beside him looked to his safety when he slept, and took charge of his horse. In this way couriers with despatches for London from Vienna, have ridden from the latter capital to Calais

without stopping, the distance being about nine hundred miles.

In 1763, a Mr. Shafto won a match which was to provide a person who should ride one hundred miles a day, on any one horse each day, for twenty-nine days together, and to have any number of horses not exceeding twenty-nine. The jockey accomplished the task with fourteen horses, and on one day rode one hundred and sixty miles on account of the tiring of his first horse. The celebrated Lafayette rode in August, 1778, from Rhode Island to Boston, a distance of nearly seventy miles in seven hours, and returned in six hours and half.

One of the most extraordinary feats in the way of express riding performed in modern times was that of a boy of fifteen, Frederick Tyler, who conveyed, from Montgomery to Mobile, the news of the two days' battle, fought between the armies of the United States and Mexico in the summer of 1846. The distance, one hundred and ninety miles, was accomplished in thirteen hours; and during the entire night the boy caught and saddled his horses, none of which were in readiness, as he was not looked for by those who had the horses in charge.

A bet against time was won in July, 1840, by an Arab horse at Bungalow, in the presidency of

Madras, to run four hundred miles in four consecutive days. Mr. Frazer relates, in his "Tartar Journeys," a still more striking instance of the speed and bottom of the Arab: a horse of that breed carried him from Shiraz to Teheran, five hundred and twenty-two miles in six days, remained three at rest, went back in five days, remained nine at Shiraz, and returned again to Teheran in seven days. Another high-blooded Arabian carried Mr. Frazer from Teheran to Koom, eighty-four miles, in about ten hours. A courier, whom Major Keppel fell in with between Kermanshaw and Hamadan, places one hundred and twenty miles distant from each other, performed that journey, over a rugged mountainous tract, in little more than twenty-four hours; and the next morning set off on the same horse for Teheran, two hundred miles further, expecting to reach it on the second day.

It is, of course, among the wild races inhabiting vast level tracts, such as are suitable to the habits and constitution of the horse, that the power of holding out long in the saddle is most assiduously and most generally cultivated. There are tribes and nations who may be said to spend the greater part of their lives on horseback:—the Kirghis, for instance, in Central Asia; the Guachos, or countryfolk of

European descent, who inhabit the immense Pampas, or plains of South America; and, in a still higher degree, the Indians of the same regions. The Pampas, though fertile, are totally uncultivated, and yield the scattered inhabitants no other nourishment than water, and the flesh of the unappropriated herds of cattle and horses, that roam over them in countless multitudes. Their hardy inhabitants are thus portrayed by Sir Francis Head:—

“The life of the Guacho is very interesting. Born in the rude hut, the infant receives little attention, but is left to swing from the roof in a bullock’s hide, the corners of which are drawn towards each other by four strips of hide. In the first year of his life he crawls about without clothes, and I have more than once seen a mother give a child of this age a sharp knife, a foot long, to play with. As soon as he walks his infantine amusements are those which prepare him for the occupations of his future life: with a lasso made of twine he tries to catch little birds or the dogs as they walk in and out of the hut. By the time he is four years old he is on horseback, and immediately becomes useful by assisting to drive the cattle into the corrál. The manner in which these children ride is quite extraordinary: if a horse tries to escape from the flock which are driven

towards the corrál (the enclosure for cattle), I have frequently seen a child pursue him, overtake him, and then bring him back, flogging him the whole way ; in vain the creature tries to dodge and escape from him, for the child turns with him, and always keeps close to him ; and it is a curious fact, which I have often observed, that a mounted horse is always able to overtake a loose one.

“ His amusements and his occupations soon become more manly. Careless of the biscacheros (the holes of an animal called the biscacho, which undermine the plains, and which are very dangerous) he gallops after the ostrich, the gáma, the puma, and the jaguar ; he catches them with his balls ; and with his lasso he daily assists in catching the wild cattle and dragging them to the hut, either for slaughter or to be milked. He breaks in the young horses, and in these occupations is often away from his hut many days, changing his horse as soon as the animal is tired, and sleeping on the ground. As his constant food is beef and water, his constitution is so strong that he is able to endure great fatigue ; and the distances he will ride, and the number of hours he will remain on horseback, would hardly be credited. The unrestrained freedom of such a life he fully appreciates ; and, unacquainted with subjection of any

sort, his mind is often inspired with sentiments of liberty which are as noble as they are harmless, although they of course partake of the wild habits of his life. Vain is the endeavour to explain to him the luxuries and blessings of a more civilized life; his ideas are, that the noblest effort of man is to raise himself off the ground and ride instead of walk; that no rich garments or variety of food can atone for the want of a horse; and that the print of the human foot on the ground is the symbol of uncivilization.

“The character of the Guacho is often very estimable, he is always hospitable; at his hut the traveller is sure to find a friendly welcome, and he will often be received with a natural dignity of manner which is very remarkable, and which he scarcely expects to meet with in such a miserable looking hovel. On my entering the hut, the Guacho has constantly risen to offer me his seat, which I have declined, and many compliments and bows have passed, until I have accepted his offer,—the skeleton of a horse’s head. It is curious to see them invariably take off their hats to each other as they enter a room which has no window, a bullock’s hide for a door, and but little roof.”

Sir Francis, who had occasion to make frequent journeys across the Pampas between Buenos Ayres

to the Andes, adopted the Guacho style of riding, galloping from sunrise to sunset without stopping except to change horses, sleeping at night on the bare ground with his saddle for a pillow, and living on beef and water. So violent was the exertion, that at first the blood used to gush from his nose as he sank down at evening utterly exhausted; but practice hardened him by degrees, and at length such was the effect of this rude training and simple diet, that he felt, to use his own words, "as if nothing would kill him."

Every one has heard of the celebrated highwayman Turpin, his black mare, and the incredibly short space of time in which she is said to have carried him from London to York, animated by the juice of a beef-steak, which the bold robber had tied round the bit. The efficacy of this expedient appears to be established. We ourselves are aware of its having been practised by a noted hardriding butcher of Dover, and it is deserving of remark, that his horse was of an exceedingly violent and ungovernable temper, possibly from the effects of this frequent beef-chewing. An inhabitant of Hamah in Syria, assured Burckhardt that he had often given his horses roasted meat before the commencement of a fatiguing journey, that they might be the better able to endure it; and the same

person fearing lest the governor should take from him his favourite horse, fed him for a fortnight exclusively upon roasted pork, which so excited his spirit and mettle, that he became absolutely unmanageable, and no longer an object of desire to the governor. The classical reader will call to mind the mares of Diomedes, which were fed upon human flesh, according to the Greek legend, and which it was one of the labours of Hercules to capture.

In the "Edinburgh Journal of Natural History," we find the following passage:—"We are assured by Mr. Youatt, that in Auvergne fat soups are given to cattle, especially when sick or enfeebled, for the purpose of invigorating them. The same practice is observed in some parts of North America, where the country people mix, in winter, fat broth with the vegetables given to their cattle, in order to render them more capable of resisting the severity of the weather. These broths have been long considered efficacious by the veterinary practitioners of our own country in restoring horses which have been enfeebled through long illness. It is said by Peall to be a common practice in some parts of India to mix animal substances with the grain given to feeble horses, and to boil the mixture into a sort of paste, which soon brings them into good condition, and restores their

vigour. Pallas tells us that the Russian boors make use of the dried flesh of the Hamster reduced to powder, and mixed with oats; and that this occasions their horses to acquire a sudden and extraordinary degree of *embonpoint*. Anderson relates, in his 'History of Iceland,' that the inhabitants feed their horses with dried fishes when the cold is very intense, and that these animals are extremely vigorous, though small. We also know that in the Feroe Islands, the Orkneys, the Western Islands, and in Norway, where the climate is very cold, this practice is also adopted; and it is not uncommon in some very warm countries,—as in the kingdom of Muskat, in Arabia Felix, near the straits of Ormuz, one of the most fertile parts of Arabia, fish and other animal substances are there given to the horses in the cold season, as well as in times of scarcity."

From horses eating to horses eaten, the transition is easy and natural. Wherever the animal exists in an unreclaimed state, its flesh is a staple article of food. The Kirghis Kassaks pursue it with hawks, and shoot it with arrows, or drive it into the Caspian Sea to be drowned. The Calmucks, Mongols, and other Tartars, make use of horse meat, and manufacture a weak spirit, called koumiss, from mare's milk. The mounted Indians of South America have no other

food than the flesh, milk, and blood of their mares, which they never ride; and the only luxury in which they indulge habitually, is that of washing their hair in mare's blood. They are fond indeed of intoxicating liquors, which they drink to excess when they can procure them from the white men; but this happens only on rare occasions, and they have none of their own manufacture.

The tribes that, settling, some fifteen hundred or two thousand years ago, in the regions of Europe surrounding the Baltic, brought with them the worship of Odin, were undoubtedly of Asiatic origin, and came probably from the banks of the Don, and the shores of the Black Sea. It is a curious confirmation of this opinion, that the eating of horseflesh prevailed among their descendants down to the eleventh century. Now such a custom could never have arisen spontaneously in a country like Germany, or Scandinavia, where the animal was comparatively scarce and valuable, but it must have existed from the earliest times in the inexhaustible pastures of the plains of Asia. It was practised at the religious feasts of the Pagan north, in commemoration of the original land of those who partook of the banquet, and was a token of adherence to the religion of Odin. In one of Pope Zachary's letters to Saint Boniface, the great apostle

of the Germans, he enjoins that pious missionary to prevent the eating of horseflesh ; and St. Olaf, the cruel king, who converted the Scandinavians to Christianity by the sword, put to death or mutilated all who persisted in using that heathenish food. Odinism is now extinct, and no man can be tempted by hostility to Christianity to prefer horse-steaks to beef-steaks. Yet is it not very curious to find that neither a total change of religion, nor the lapse of seven centuries have quite extinguished the hereditary taste of the northern nations for such untempting viands ? There has even sprung up in Germany, of late years, a society having for its object to encourage and promote the use of horseflesh for human food ! The horse is the only animal slaughtered for the supply of the prisoners, in the house of correction in Copenhagen. Mr. Bremner, who courageously tasted both the soup and the *bouilli*, says, that the latter is "tough, like the worst kinds of beef, but by no means bad to eat, or disagreeable in taste, only dry and thready. Had we not been told, we should have taken it for the flesh of an ox ill fed."

Is it not wonderful thus to behold systems of cookery surviving systems of religion out of which they arose, and to see empires and kingdoms pass away, while the practices of the kitchen hold their

ground? Special inclinations to certain kinds of food, may be constantly traced among different nations. Swine's flesh has been from all times an abomination to the Arabians; and the aversion of the Jew to pork, wisely confirmed by Divine command, is a striking indication of his Arabian origin. The Germanic nations have always held beef in favour, and they alone know how to prepare it so as to make it savoury and nutritive. In Germany as in England, in Sweden as in Norway and Denmark, the German blood announces itself by this unfailing test. The Roman nations, *i. e.* the French, the Spaniards, and the Italians have all something in common, in their kitchen as in their language and history. The Tartar princes long domesticated in St. Peterburg, and accustomed to every Western luxury, still have their feasts of horseflesh, which is dressed in twenty different forms, and which they wash down with the choicest vintages of France and Germany.

Stow makes no mention of horse-baiting as among the pastimes of the Londoners in former days, and for the honour of our ancestors we could hope that so brutal a sport was seldom witnessed; but that it was occasionally practised is certain. Ass-baiting, although more common, does not appear to have become very popular; not probably from any lack of inclination to

torment, but because the poor ass resisted feebly, and made but little sport. In Malcolm's "Anecdotes of London" we are told, that so late as 1682, horse-baiting was witnessed, and under circumstances of singular barbarity. Notice was given in the public papers that on the 12th of April, a horse of uncommon strength, and between eighteen and nineteen hands high, would be baited to death at his Majesty's bear-garden, at the Hope, on the Bank-side, for the amusement of the Morocco ambassador, and any nobility who knew the horse, or would pay the price of admission. It seems that this animal originally belonged to the Earl of Rochester, and being of a ferocious disposition, had killed several other horses, for which misdeeds he was sold to the Earl of Dorchester, and in his service he committed several similar offences; he was then transferred to the worse than savages, who kept the bear-garden. On the day appointed, several dogs were set on the ferocious steed, but he destroyed, or drove them from the area. At length his owners determined to reserve him for a future day's sport, and directed a person to lead him away; but before the horse had reached London bridge, the spectators demanded the fulfilment of the promise of baiting him to death, and began to destroy the building. At last the poor beast was brought

back, and other dogs set upon him without effect, when he was stabbed to death with a sword.

A parallel for this barbarity is recorded in Colonel Davidson's "Travels in Upper India." He saw at Lucknow in the king's stable, a beautiful bay English blood horse, which had been presented by George IV. to a former king of Oude. The animal was blinded with cloths, and fastened on each side of his head-stall with strong chains, his vicious temper rendering these precautions necessary. While thus secured he was not only a windsucker, but a weaver; and his whole body incessantly moved from one side to another without rest by night or day. On the colonel's calling out in groom's fashion, "Come up!" the weaving instantly ceased, the horse trembled violently, and then suddenly lashed out with his hind legs, as if he wished to kick the speaker to atoms. Attempts had been made to educate him in the native style, and this was the cause that had rendered him so intolerably vicious; nor is this to be wondered at, for few horses possess tempers sufficiently good to endure the severe treatment of the native riding schools. On the accession of the late king of Oude, this poor creature was turned loose into a court-yard with a hungry royal Bengal tiger. The battle was of considerable duration; but the event proved the power and spirit of the

horse, who kicked the tiger to death after his own bowels had been torn out, and trailed on the ground.

M. Arnauld, in his "History of Animals," relates the following incident of ferocious courage in a mule:—
"This animal belonged to a gentleman in Florence, and became so vicious and refractory, that his master resolved to make away with him, by exposing him to the wild beasts in the managerie of the grand duke. For this purpose he was first placed in the dens of the hyenas and tigers, all of whom he would have soon destroyed, had he not been speedily removed. At last he was handed over to the lion, but the mule, instead of exhibiting any symptoms of alarm, quietly receded to a corner, keeping his front opposed to his adversary. Once planted in the corner, he resolutely kept his place, eyeing every movement of the lion, which was preparing to spring upon him. The lion, however, perceiving the difficulty of an attack, practised all his wiles to throw the mule off his guard, but in vain. At length the latter, perceiving an opportunity, made a sudden rush upon the lion, and in an instant broke several of his teeth by the stroke of his fore-feet. The 'king of beasts,' as he has been called, finding that he had got quite enough of the combat, slunk grumbling to his cage, and left the sturdy mule master of the field."



CHAPTER V.

PRIMITIVE STOCK OF WILD HORSES—THE STEPPES.

ARE there any genuine wild horses in existence—that is to say, any that are not descended, like those of South America, from a domesticated stock? Naturalists have all concurred until very recently in answering this question negatively. They were of opinion that, as in the case of the sheep, the goat, and some other domestic animals, not a singular indication remains by which we can judge of the form, the colour, or the habits, by which the horse was characterized before it became the servant of man, or how far it may have differed from the present domesticated races. But this opinion is entirely gratuitous, and unsupported by a single fact. They choose to assume, in defiance of probability and of testimony, that the herds of horses that roam over the vast unexplored regions of Central Asia are not wild but feral (that

is, sprung from a tame stock), for no other reason than because they are not very unlike our ordinary domestic breeds. Colonel Hamilton Smith, a writer of great authority, has combated these notions with great force.

“Whatever,” he says, “may be the lucubrations of naturalists in their cabinets, it does not appear that the Tahtar or even the Cossack nations have any doubt upon the subject; for they assert that they can distinguish a feral breed from the wild by many tokens, and naming the former *takja* and *muzin*, they denominate the real wild horse *tarpan* and *tarpani*. We have had some opportunity of making personal inquiries on wild horses among a considerable number of Cossacks of different parts of Russia, and among Bashkirs, Kirguise, and Kalmucs, and with a sufficient recollection of the statements of Pallas and Buffon’s information obtained from M. Sanchez, to direct the questions to most of the points at issue. From the answers of Russian officers of this irregular cavalry, who spoke French or German, we drew the general conclusion of their general belief in a true wild and untamable species of horse, and in herds that were of mixed origin. Those most acquainted with a nomadic life, and in particular an orderly Cossack attached to a Tahtar chief as Russian inter-

preter, furnished us with the substance of the following notice. The tarpani form herds of several hundreds, subdivided into smaller troops, each headed by a stallion ; they are not found unmixed excepting towards the borders of China ; they prefer wide, open, elevated steppes, and always proceed in lines or files, usually with the head to windward, moving slowly forward while grazing, the stallions leading, and occasionally going round their own troop. Young stallions are often at some distance, and single, because they are expelled by the older, until they can form a troop of mares of their own ; their heads are seldom observed to be down for any length of time ; they utter now and then a kind of snort, with a low neigh somewhat like a horse expecting its oats, but yet are distinguishable by the voice from any domestic species, excepting the woolly Kalmuc breed. They have a remarkably piercing sight, the point of a Cossack spear at a great distance on the horizon, seen behind a bush, being sufficient to make a whole troop halt ; but this is not a token of alarm ; it soon resumes its march, till some young stallion on the skirts begins to blow with his nostrils, moves his ears in all directions with rapidity, and trots or scampers forward to reconnoitre, the head being very high, and the tail out ; if his curiosity is satisfied, he stops and begins to

graze; but if he takes alarm, he flings up his croup, turns round, and with peculiarly shrill neighing warns the herd, which immediately turns round, and gallops off at an amazing rate, with the stallions in the rear, stopping and looking back repeatedly, while the mares and foals disappear as if by enchantment, because, with unerring tact, they select the first swell of ground, or ravine, to conceal them, until they re-appear at a great distance, generally in a direction to preserve the lee-side of the apprehended danger. Although bears and wolves occasionally prowl after a herd, they will not venture to attack it, for the sultan-stallion will instantly meet the enemy, and, rising on his haunches, strike him down with his fore-feet; and should he be worsted, which is seldom the case, another stallion becomes the champion; and in the case of a troop of wolves, the herd forms a close mass, with the foals within, and the stallions charge in a body, which no troop of wolves will venture to encounter. Carnivora, therefore, must be contented with aged or injured stragglers.

“The sultan-stallion is not, however, suffered to retain the chief authority for more than one season without opposition from others, rising, in the confidence of youthful strength, to try by battle whether the leadership should not be confided to them, and the

defeated party driven from the herd in exile. These animals are found in the greatest purity in the Kara Koom, south of the lake Aral, and the Syrdaria, near Kusneh, on the banks of the river Tom, in the territory of the Kalkas, the Mongolian deserts, and the solitudes of the Gobi. Within the Russian frontier there are, however, some adulterated herds, in the vicinity of the fixed settlements, distinguishable by the variety of their colours, and a selection of residence less remote from human habitations. Real tarpans are not larger than ordinary mules; their colour is invariably tan, Isabella, or mouse, being all shades of the same livery, and only varying in depth by the growth or decrease of a whitish surcoat, longer than the hair, increasing from Midsummer, and shedding in May; during the cold season it is long, heavy, and soft, lying so close as to feel like a bear's fur, and then is entirely grizzled; in summer much falls away, leaving only a certain quantity on the back and loins: the head is small; the forehead greatly arched; and the ears far back, either long or short; the eyes small and malignant; the chin and muzzle beset with bristles; the neck rather thin, and crested with a thick rugged mane, which, like the tail, is black, as are also the pasterns, which are long; the hoofs are narrow, high, and rather pointed; the tail,

descending only to the hocks, is furnished with coarse and rather curly or wavy hairs, close up to the crupper; the croup is as high as the withers. The voice of the tarpan is loud, and shriller than that of a domestic horse; and their action, standing, and general appearance resembles somewhat those of vicious mules. Such is the general evidence obtained from the orderly before mentioned; a man who was a perfect model of an independent trooper of the desert, and who had spent ten or twelve years on the frontier of China."

Leo Africanus states that there are wild horses in Northern Africa, and that they are sometimes taken by means of snares, and their flesh is eaten by the Arabs. This is probably the animal first described by Colonel H. Smith, under the name of Koomrah. It differs remarkably from all other known breeds in not being gregarious. It inhabits the mountain forests, whence it comes down singly or in small groups, to the wells, where only it is liable to be captured, by men or by beasts of prey; but its wariness, its keen sense of smell, its fleetness, and the courage and fierceness with which it defends itself when brought to bay, render it very difficult to be taken. Colonel H. Smith says, "of the real koomrah we have seen a living specimen in England, and the skin of another. The first came from Barbary; the second died on

board of a slave-ship, on the passage from the coast of Guinea to the West Indies in 1798, the skin, legs, and head having been carefully preserved by the master, who kindly permitted a sketch and notes to be made of it at Dominica.

“ The koomrah of the mountains is about ten, or ten and a half hands, high ; the head is broad across the forehead, and deep measured to the jawl ; it is small, short, and pointed at the muzzle, making the profile almost triangular ; instead of a forelock between the ears, down to the eyes the hair is long and woolly ; the eyes are small, of a light hazel colour ; and the ears large and wide ; the neck thin, forming an angle with the head, and clad with a scanty but long black mane ; the shoulder rather vertical and meagre, with withers low, but the croup high and broad ; the barrel large ; thighs cat-hammed, and the limbs clean but asinine, with the hoofs elongated ; short-pastern, small callosities on the hind legs ; and the tail clothed with short fur for several inches before the long black hair begins. The animal is entirely of a reddish bay colour, without streak or mark on the spine, or any white about the limbs. We made our sketch at Portsmouth, and believe it refers to the same animal which lived for many years, if we are rightly informed, in a paddock of the late Lord Grenville’s. There was

in the British Museum a stuffed specimen exactly corresponding in size and colour, but with a head (possibly in consequence of the taxidermist wanting the real skull) much longer and less in depth. The other specimen, which came from the mountains north of Accra in Guinea, was again entirely similar. We were told that in voice it differed from both horse and ass; and in temper, that which died on shipboard, though very wild and shy at first, was by no means vicious, and it fed on sea-biscuit with willingness."

The Steppes, as the great table land of Central Asia is called, extend from the borders of Hungary to those of China. They constitute an almost uninterrupted plain, of considerable elevation, covered in spring and autumn by a luxuriant herbage; in winter by drifting snows, heaped up in some places, and leaving the ground bare in others; and in summer by clouds of dust so excessively fine, that even on the calmest day they hang suspended in the air, having the appearance rather of a vapour exhaled from the ground, than of earthly particles raised by the agitation of the atmosphere. The slight undulations that occur assume but rarely the character of hills; but artificial hillocks or tumuli are frequently met with, the origin of which it is impossible to trace through the darkness of bygone ages. The most singular

characteristic, however, of the Steppe is, the total absence of trees, on a soil remarkable for its richness, and the luxuriance of its herbage. For hundreds of miles a traveller may proceed in a straight line without encountering even a bush, unless he happens to be acquainted with the few spots known to the Tartar sportsmen, to whom they answer the purpose of game preserves. Countless herds of horned cattle, and wild or half-wild horses roam over these noble pasture grounds, on which a calf, born at the foot of the great Chinese wall, might eat his way along until he arrived a well fattened ox, on the banks of the Dniestr, prepared to figure with advantage at the Odessa market. The poor animals suffer much during the hot and dry summers, when every blade of grass is parched up; but the careful herdsman who has provided himself with an abundant stock of hay, is able to keep his beasts alive until autumn returns to gladden them with fresh abundance.

The most pleasing aspect of the Steppe is that presented in spring. In the first week of that season, while as yet the snow has scarcely disappeared from the earth, a luxuriant vegetation springs up, converting the waste into a fairy scene. On this carpet of rich green grass, variegated by the hyacinth, the tulip, the crocus, and the wild mignonette, besides a thou-

sand other flowers, a traveller mounted on the fleetest steed, and riding without intermission night and day, if such a thing were possible, would find the spring elapse before he could reach the end of this vast plain, so large a portion of the earth's surface does it cover ; and so little would he find it differing from the frontiers of the Ukraine to those of Chinese Tartary, that at his journey's end he might still fancy the same scene surrounded him as when he began it; the Steppe almost everywhere resembling the Steppe on its eastern, the same as on its western frontier.

With the first summer months the soil which is badly watered becomes dry and arid in the burning sun; the grass withers and turns brown, and then more dusky still, as it gets covered with the black dust which the wind disturbs, until at last the whole Steppe becomes covered with the same sombre hue; life seems for ever destroyed in all the withered vegetation, except wormwood and prickly weeds, which cover whole tracts, still thriving in the rankness of the nitrous soil, wherein they have grown to such gigantic size, that the thistles rise like little woods, capable of concealing a whole encampment, and in which a mounted rider is perfectly hidden when sitting on the tallest horse.

Towards the end of summer one parched and arid

wilderness extends around on every side, in which the cattle grow thin and languid, and often perish in great numbers for want of water. The Russian herdsman can no longer extract a draft of milk from his cows; the Tartar finds that the dugs of his mares refuse him the needful refreshment. Towards autumn the Steppe is constantly set fire to; sometimes through carelessness or wilfulness, sometimes for sake of the young crop of grass that shoots up through the ashes, when the mists and dewy nights of autumn give a fresh and ephemeral life to the productions of the earth. The fires sometimes extend for hundreds of miles, and give rise to frequent accidents.

The method of escaping from the flames, which come on roaring and crackling over an extent many miles in width, is not by flight; because though the steed may carry his rider faster than the fire can travel, it is sure to overtake the fugitive in the long run. The inhabitants of the Steppe resort to the same means as those of the American prairies to save themselves; they combat fire by fire, and kindling the grass to leeward, they advance in the rear of the flames, which clears the way for them, and leaves no food for the burning sea that is rushing towards them.

In the autumn water is less scarce; a partial verdure springs through the withered stems of grass and

plants, and the herds recover. The winter is intensely cold. The piercing winds which have swept across the North American continent and the Arctic regions of Siberia, howl over these now desolate and cheerless regions, where nothing breaks the monotony of thousands and thousands of miles of level ground, except the tumuli of the ancient Mongol warriors, the tents of the Kalmuck and the Tartar, and the huts of the Cossack or the herdsman, and where nothing intervenes to arrest the violence or to modify the rigour of the freezing blast. No language can give an adequate idea of these *metels* as they are called in Southern Russia. They come down on the land with such whirling and driving gusts, such furious and continuous tempests, such whistlings and roarings of the wind, and a sky so murky and threatening, that no hurricane at sea can be more terrific. The snow is now piled up mountains high, now hollowed into deep valleys, now spread out into rushing and heaving billows; or it is driven through the air, fluttering like a long white veil, until the wind has scattered the last shreds before it. Whole flocks of sheep, surprised by the tempest close to their folds, and even herds of horses, have been driven into the Black Sea or the Caspian, and drowned. When beset by such dangers their instinct usually prompts them to cluster together

in a circle and form a compact mass, so as to present a less surface to the *metel*. But the force of the wind gradually compels them onwards;—they reach the shore, their footing fails, and finally they are all engulfed in the waves.

In the European Steppes the cold often reaches 30° Reaumur, or far below the point at which boiling water cast up in the air falls to the earth in a shower of frozen hailbeads. Even where some of the most southern Asiatic Steppes assume the character of the African Sahara, and where the camel in the summer sinks up to his knees in the burning sand, in winter the icicles gather as thickly on the few straggling hairs of the Tartar's chin, as they do on the bushy beard of the Muscovite on the banks of the Neva. Perovski, the governor of Orenburg, on his expedition to Khiva, six winters since, was arrested by the impassable snow, on the very route which he dared not undertake in the summer months for fear of being buried under the hot and drifting sand, as it has not unfrequently happened to the caravans which ventured to invade the solitude of this desert.

The region of the Steppes is the home of the Cossacks, of a portion of the Mongol race, and of more than a score of Tartar tribes. It is the home of the camel and of the fat-tailed Kirghis sheep; of the wild

steed and of the Taboon horse, scarcely tame ; of the grey oxen, which furnish nearly all our tallow ; of the antelope and the bustard. The wolf, driven to change his habits, burrows in these immense plains like a fox ; the jackal infests portions of them ; and the destroying locust falls like a blight and a curse on the young green grass of the free space, or on the rising harvest of the agricultural pioneer. On some parts of these wide Steppes dwell the most hideous of the human race, the Calmucks and Baskirs ; and on other parts the Circassians, the most beautiful of their species, still sometimes descend in their predatory excursions.*

* Revelations of Russia. Hommaire de Hell's Steppes of the Caucasus.





CHAPTER VI.

THE CENTAUR—THE MONGOLS AND CALMUCKS—
A RUSSIAN TABOON.



HE origin of the fabulous Centaur is referred by some of the learned to the Steppes, whence the first horses, and probably their riders also, passed into Thessaly. The equestrian skill acquired by the Thessalians at an early period when the horse was unknown in the rest of Greece, might have induced the imaginative beholders to declare in hyperbolical language that the horse and rider were one body:—

“ These gallants
Had witchcraft in 't; they grew into their seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought their horse
As they had been incorpsed, and deminated
With the brave beast.”

And thus what was at first but a figurative expression, may have come afterwards to be regarded as



A CALMUCK EQUESTRIAN COURTSHIP.

standing for a literal truth. Or, as it is still more likely, the appearance of the first mounted strangers may have so terrified the native inhabitants, as to have sent them flying, with an awful story in their mouths of the invasion of the country by a set of monsters, half man, half quadruped. Thus it was in South America, where the natives for a long while believed that the cavalry of the invaders were composite animals, which they called Gachupins, a word which continued to be applied as a nickname to the Spaniards, until they were expelled from the continent. The Mongol Tartar of the Steppes is just such a being as an artist would choose to form the human portion of the more than half brutish figure of the Centaur. The upper portion of his frame is well developed, but his weak and ill-formed legs seem made only to hold him on his horse, on whose back he passes most of his life, and with which he appears to form as it were one whole. The Tartar's head, round as a bullet, looks like a weight stuck on his body to balance it in the gallop. No other expression than those of animal impulses is discernible in his hard features, and small, black, oblique eyes. He scarcely exhibits a trace of those spiritual conceptions which are to be found among all other races, however rude; he possesses not the least element of a mytho-

logy, or of a primitive religion. The ancients, who make mention of this people, say that they worshipped the sword as the emblem of physical force; and, according to the traditions and songs of the Slavonic nations, the Tartar has a new deity for every day of his life, a saying which very significantly expresses a devotion that regards only the enjoyments of each passing day. Blind obedience to their leaders is instinctive in this race; and military discipline, which among others is the elaborate work of art, is with them the spontaneous impulse of nature. Their leaders, who have obtained such hideous renown, combined in their own persons all the good and bad qualities of their hordes; they were born to command armies, and possessed the art of strategy in the highest degree, and were utterly incapable of mercy. The deeds of Attila, the scourge of God, are well known. Genghis Khan, sitting in his tent beneath the pole-star, issued his orders to two armies, one of which was devastating India, the other Germany. Nay, the inferior leaders often apprehended and fell in with the general plan of operations without receiving any special instructions; the whole host, the whole race, was evermore conducted by the unfailing instinct that guides the vulture to its prey. Genghis Khan could not read, he did not even know the history of his own

race, and yet he and the other Mongol conquerors were not barbarians, if the art of creating wealth and power constitutes civilization. The Mongols were sedulous to advance trade and manufactures. When they sacked a city, they generally exempted the artisans from the general butchery, and transported them to their own dominions. The system of posting was known to them; Genghis Khan's courier-stations extended from China to Poland. It was his wish to establish everywhere one uniform system of weights and measures, and it is said that he even hit upon the invention of bank-notes.

Were we now to ask, what was the purpose of all the Mongol expeditions to the remotest regions, it would not be easy to answer the question. Their leaders did not set the least value on the wealth they seemed to hunt after. Destruction was their only apparent object. It was once coolly discussed by them in a council of war, whether it would not be better to extirpate the whole population of Persia, and turn the entire face of the country into pasture ground; and the plan was very near being realized. The Mongol rulers always declared that it was their vocation to chastise and exterminate mankind, a belief which is not yet extinct in the race of Genghis Khan. The Mongols possess not one poet, not one artist, never-

theless they can claim one architectural invention as peculiarly their own, that, namely, of building up towers of living men cemented together with mortar. Timur Lenk, or Tamurlane, used to assist the masons with his own hand at this work. What is the greatest bliss in this world? This question having been once propounded among the sages and chief men, the Khan replied: "It is to vanquish the foe, to outrage his wife before his eyes, to slaughter his children, and then to torture himself to death." The sovereign's opinion exactly coincided with that of the people.

Such is the character of the race that first perhaps deserved the name of "tamers of horses."

The Calmucks, a principal branch of the great Mongol stock, are more widely dispersed over the globe than any other, even the Arabs not excepted. Tribes of this people occur over all the countries of Upper Asia, between 38° and 52° north latitude, and from the most northern bend of the Hoang-ho to the banks of the Volga. They are the *Hippophagi*, or eaters of horseflesh, of Pliny, and the more ancient historians. They have very large settlements in the neighbourhood of Taganrok, and there Dr. Clarke had an opportunity of studying their habits and appearance. Calmuck men and women were continually galloping their horses through the streets of the town,

or lounging in the public places. The women, he says, ride better than the men, and a male Calmuck on horseback looks as if he was intoxicated, and likely to fall off every instant though he never loses his seat ; but the women sit with much ease, and ride with extraordinary skill. We shall see however by and by, that the men are better equestrians than the learned traveller supposed. The ceremony of marriage among the Calmucks is performed on horseback. A girl is first mounted and rides off at full speed. Her lover pursues, and if he overtakes her she becomes his wife on the spot, and then returns with him to his tent. But it sometimes happens that the woman does not wish to marry the person by whom she is pursued, in which case she will not suffer him to overtake her ; and Dr. Clarke was assured that no instance occurs of a Calmuck girl being thus caught unless she has a partiality for her pursuer. If she dislikes him she rides, in English sporting phrase, *neck or nothing*, until she has completely escaped, or until the pursuer's horse is tired out, leaving her at liberty to return, to be afterwards chased by some more favoured admirer.

Of all the inhabitants of the Russian empire, the Calmucks are the most distinguished by peculiarity of feature and manners. In their personal appearance they are athletic, and very forbidding. Their hair is

coarse and black, their language harsh and guttural. The Cossacks alone esteem them, and intermarry with them; and these unions sometimes produce women of very great beauty, although nothing is more hideous than a Calmuck. High, prominent, broad cheek bones, widely separated from each other; a flat and broad nose; coarse, greasy, jet black hair; scarcely any eyebrows; and enormous prominent ears, constitute no very inviting portrait. Their persons are indescribably filthy, and their habits loathsome. They eat raw horseflesh, and may be seen tearing it like wild beasts from large bones which they hold in their hands. Sometimes they cook their meat, but not in a manner that would make it much more inviting to an English stomach. They cut the muscular parts into steaks which they place under their saddles, and after they have galloped thirty or forty miles, they find the meat tender and palatable. This is a common practice with them on their journeys. The author of *Hudibras* alludes to this culinary process in terms more pointed than decorous.

Every body has heard of the fermented liquor called *koumiss*, which the Calmucks, the Tartars, &c., manufacture from the milk of the mare. It is produced by combining with six of warm milk, one part of warm water, and a little very sour milk or old

koumiss. The vessel is then covered with a thick cloth and left in a moderately warm place for twenty-four hours, until the whole mass becomes sour. After this it is twice beaten with a stick in the shape of a churn staff, so as perfectly to mix together the thick parts and the thin. This being done the process is complete, and the liquor is ready for drinking.

A subsequent process of distillation obtains from this koumiss an ardent spirit called *rack* or *racky*, a name identical with that given to the spirit manufactured in the East Indies. Dr. Clarke found some women in the act of making it. "The still," he says, was composed of mud, or very close clay. For the neck of the retort a cane was used; and the receiver was entirely covered by a coating of wet clay. The brandy had just passed over. The woman who had the management of the distillery, wishing to give us a small taste of the spirit, thrust a stick with a small tuft of camel's hair into the receiver, dropped a portion of it on the retort, and waving the instrument above her head, scattered the remaining liquor in the air. I asked the meaning of this ceremony, and was told it was a religious custom to give always the first of the brandy which they drew from the receiver to their god. The stick was then plunged into the liquor a second time, when more brandy adhering to

the camel's hair, she squeezed it into the palm of her dirty hand, and having tasted the liquor, presented it to our lips."

A recent traveller, Madame de Hell, gives a more pleasing picture of the Calmucks, whom she saw under favourable circumstances, being the guest of one of their princes. The following is her account of an equestrian entertainment she witnessed :—

"The moment we were perceived, five or six mounted men, armed with long lassos (strong flexible thongs with running nooses) rushed into the middle of the taboon (herd of half wild horses), keeping their eyes constantly fixed on the young prince, who was to point out the animal they should seize. The signal being given, they instantly galloped forward and noosed a young horse with a long dishevelled mane, whose dilated eyes and smoking nostrils betokened inexpressible terror. A lightly-clad Calmuck, who followed them on foot, immediately sprang upon the stallion, cut the thongs that were throttling him, and engaged with him in an incredible contest of daring and agility. It would be impossible, I think, for any spectacle more vividly to affect the mind than that which now met our eyes. Sometimes the rider and his horse rolled together on the grass; sometimes they shot through the air with the speed of an arrow,

and then stopped abruptly, as if a wall had all at once risen up before them. On a sudden the furious animal would crawl on its belly, or rear in a manner that made us shriek with terror, then plunging forward again in his mad gallop, he would dash through the taboo, and endeavour in every possible way to shake off his novel burden.

“But this exercise, violent and dangerous as it appeared to us, seemed but sport to the Calmuck, whose body followed all the movements of the animal with so much suppleness, that one would have fancied that the same spirit animated both bodies. The sweat poured in foaming streams from the stallion’s flanks, and he trembled in every limb. As for the rider, his coolness would have put to shame the most accomplished horseman in Europe. In the most critical moments he still found himself at liberty to wave his arms in token of triumph; and in spite of the indomitable humour of his steed, he had sufficient command over it to keep it almost always within the circle of our vision. At a signal from the prince, two horsemen, who had kept as close as possible to the daring centaur, seized him with amazing quickness, and galloped away with him, before we had time to comprehend this new manœuvre. The horse, for a moment stupified, soon made off at full speed, and was

lost in the midst of the herd. These performances were repeated several times without a single rider suffering himself to be thrown.

“But what was our amazement when we saw a boy of ten years come forward to undertake the same exploit! They selected for him a young white stallion of great size, whose fiery bounds and desperate efforts to break his bonds, indicated a most violent temper.

“I will not attempt to depict our intense emotions during this new conflict. This child, who, like the other riders, had only the horse’s mane to cling to, afforded an example of the power of reasoning over instinct and brute force. For some minutes he maintained his difficult position with heroic intrepidity. At last, to our great relief, a horseman rode up to him, caught him up in his outstretched arm, and threw him on the croup behind him.”

We will now lay before our readers the economy of a Russian taboo, as described by Kohl, the German traveller. A small number of stallions and mares, placed under the care of a herdsman, are sent into the Steppe as the nucleus of the herd. The foals are kept, and the herd is allowed to go on increasing, until the number of horses is thought to be about as large as the estate can conveniently maintain. A taboo

seldom consists of more than a thousand horses; but there are landowners in the Steppe, who are supposed to possess eight or ten such taboons in different parts of the country. It is only when the taboon is said to be full, that the owner begins to derive revenue from it, partly by using the young horses on the estate itself, and partly by selling them at the fairs, or to the travelling horse-dealers in the employ of the government contractors.

The tabunshick, to whose care the taboon is intrusted, must be a man of indefatigable activity, and of an iron constitution; proof alike against the severest cold, and the most burning heat, and capable of living in a constant exposure to every kind of weather, without the shelter even of a bush.

It must be a matter of indifference to him whether he makes his bed at night among the wet grass, or upon the naked earth, baked for twelve hours by an almost vertical sun. In the coldest weather he can seldom hope for the shelter of a roof; and though the hot winds blow upon him like the blast of a furnace, and his skin cracks with very dryness, yet he must pass the greater part of his day in the saddle, ready at every instant to gallop off in pursuit of a stray steed, or to fly to the rescue of a young foal attacked by a ravenous wolf. The shepherd and the herdsman

carry their houses with them. Their large wagons, that always accompany them on their wanderings, afford shelter from the weather, and a warm nest at night; but these are luxuries the tabunshick must not even dream of. His charges are much too lively to be left to their own guidance. His thousand horses are not kept together in as orderly and disciplined a fashion as those of a regiment of dragoons; and it may be doubted, whether an adjutant of cavalry has to ride about as much, and to give as many orders, on a day of battle, as a tabunshick on the quietest day that he spends in the Steppe. When on duty, a tabunshick, scarcely ever quits the back of his steed. He eats there, and even sleeps there: but he must beware of sleeping at the hours when other men sleep; for while grazing at night, the horses are most apt to wander away from the herd, and at no time is it more necessary for him to be on his guard against wolves, and against those adventurous dealers in horseflesh, who usually contrive that the money which they receive at a fair, shall consist exclusively of profit. During a snow-storm, the poor tabunshick must not think of turning his back to the tempest; this his horses are too apt to do, and it is his business to see that they do not take flight, and run scouring before the wind.

The dress of a tabunshick is chiefly composed of

leather, fastened together by a leathern girdle, to which the whole veterinary apparatus, and a variety of little fanciful ornaments, are usually appended. His head is protected by a high cylindrical Tartar cap, of black lambskin; and over the whole he throws his sreetta, a large, brown, woollen cloak, with a hood to cover his head. This hood, in fine weather, hangs behind, and often serves its master at once for pocket and larder.

The tabunshick has a variety of other trappings, of which he never divests himself. Among these, his harabnick holds not the least important place. This is a whip, with a thick short stem, but with a thong often fifteen or eighteen feet in length. It is to him a sceptre that rarely quits his hand, and without which it would be difficult for him to retain his riotous subjects in any thing like proper order. Next comes his sling, which he uses like the South American lasso, and with which he rarely misses the neck of the horse whose course he is desirous of arresting. The wolf club is another indispensable part of his equipment. This club which mostly hangs at the saddle, ready for immediate use, is three or four feet long, with a thick iron knob at the end. The tabunshicks acquire such astonishing dexterity in the use of this formidable weapon, that, at full gallop they will hurl it at a wolf,

and rarely fail to strike the iron end into the prowling bandit's head. The club, skilfully wielded, carries almost as sudden death with it as the rifle of an American back-woodsman. A cask of water must also accompany the tabunshick on every ride, for he can never know whether he may not be for days without coming to a well. A bag of bread, and a bottle of brandy are likewise his constant companions, besides a multitude of other little conveniences and necessities, which are fastened either to himself, or his horse. Thus accoutred, the tabunshick sallies forth on a mission that keeps his dexterity and his power of endurance in constant exercise. His thousand untamed steeds have to be kept in order with no other weapon than his harabnick; and this, it may easily be supposed, is no easy task. His greatest trouble is with the stallions, who, after spending their ten or twelve years on the Steppe, without having once smelt the air of a stable, or felt the curb of a rein, become so ungovernable, that the tabunshick will sometimes threaten to throw up his office, unless such or such a stallion be expelled from the taboo.

Such constant exposures to fatigue and hardship, make the average life of a tabunshick extremely short. At the end of ten or fifteen years he is generally worn out, and unfit for such arduous duty.

His pay therefore is proportionably high ; for every tabunshick is a hired servant, as no serf could be impelled by any dread of punishment to exert that constant vigilance, without which the whole tabooon would be broken up in a few days. What the fear of the whip, however, cannot effect in a slave, the hope of gain may insure from a freeman. The wages of a tabunshick are regulated by the number of horses committed to his care. For each horse he usually receives five or six rubles a year ; so that the guardian of a full tabooon may earn his six thousand rubles annually (£275), if he can keep the wolf and thief at bay ; but every horse that is lost the tabunshick must pay for ; and horse stealing is carried on so largely and dextrously on the Steppe, that he may sometimes lose half a year's wages in a single night. He must also pay his assistants out of his own wages, and three assistants at least will be required to look after a tabooon of a thousand horses. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, however, the tabunshick, if he were vigilant and careful, might always save money ; but few of them do so, and it rarely happens, that when invalided, they have hoarded together a little capital to enable them to embark in any more quiet occupation.

The hardships to which they are constantly exposed, and the high wages which they receive, make

the tabunshicks the wildest dare-devils that can be imagined; so much so, that it is considered a settled point, that a man who has had the care of horses for two or three years, is unfit for any quiet, or settled kind of life. No one, of course, that can gain a tolerable livelihood in any other way, will embrace a calling that subjects him to so severe a life; and the consequence is, that it is generally from among the scamps of a village that servants are raised for this service. They are seldom without money, and when they do visit the brandy-shop, they are not deterred from abandoning themselves to a carouse by the financial considerations likely to restrain most men in the same rank of life. They ought, it is true, never to quit the taboo for a moment, but they will often spend whole nights in the little brandy-houses of the Steppe, drinking and gambling, and drowning in their fiery potations all recollections of the last day's endurance. When their senses return with the returning day, they gallop after their herds, and display no little ingenuity in repairing the mischief that may have accrued from the carelessness of the preceding night. .

The tabunshick lives in constant dread of the horse-stealer, and yet there is hardly a tabunshick on the Steppe that will not steal a horse if occasion

presents itself. The traveller, who has left his horses to graze during the night, or the villager, who has allowed his cattle to wander away from his house, will do well to ascertain that there be no taboo in the vicinity, or in the morning he will look for them in vain. The tabunshick, meanwhile, takes care to rid himself, as soon as possible, of his stolen goods, by exchanging them away to the first brother herdsman that he meets, who again barter them away to another; so that in a few days, a horse that was stolen on the banks of the Dniepr, passes from hand to hand till it reaches the Bug or the Dniestr; and the rightful owner may still be inquiring after a steed, which has already quitted the empire of the Czar, to enter the service of a Moslem, or to figure in the stud of a Hungarian magnate. The tabunshicks have constantly little affairs of this kind to transact with one another, for which the Mongolian tumuli, scattered over the Steppe, afford convenient places of rendezvous.

Accustomed to a life of roguery and hardship, and indulging constantly in every kind of excess, the tabunshick comes naturally to be looked upon, by the more orderly class, as rather a suspicious character; but his friendship is generally worth having, and his ill-will is always dreaded. His very master stands a little in awe of him, for a tabunshick is not a servant that

can be dismissed at a day's notice. When the tabooon has once become accustomed to him, the animals are not easily brought to submit to the control of a stranger. The tabunshick, moreover, has learned to know his horses; can tell the worth of each, can advise which to sell and which to keep, and knows where the best pasture ground may be looked for. Such a fellow, therefore, if intelligent and experienced, whatever his moral character may be, becomes necessary to his master, and, feeling this, is not long without presuming upon his conscious importance. He plays his wild pranks with impunity, and looks down with sovereign contempt upon the more decent members of society, particularly upon the more honest shepherds and cowherds, whom he considers, in every point of view, as an inferior race.

At the horse-fairs, the tabunshick is always a man of great importance; and it is amusing and interesting to see him, with his wild tabooon, at Balta and Berditsheff, where are held the greatest fairs between the Dniepr and the Dniestr. The horses are driven into the market in the same free condition in which they range over the Steppe, for if tied together they would become entirely ungovernable. When driven through towns and villages, the creatures are often frightened; but that occasions no trouble to their

drivers, for the herd is never more certain to keep together than when made timid by the appearance of a strange place. In the market-place the tabooon is driven into an enclosure, near which the owner seats himself, and the tabunshick enters along with his horses. The buyers walk round to make their selection. They must not expect the horses to be trotted out for their inspection, as at Tattersall's, but must judge for themselves as well as they can, with the comfortable reflection, that, after they have bought the animals, they will have ample time to become acquainted with them. "I have none but wild horses to sell," the owner will say. "Look at them as long as you please. That horse I will warrant five years old, having bred him on my own Steppe. Further than that I know nothing of him. The price is a hundred rubles. Will you take him? If you say yes, I'll order him to be caught; but I'd advise you to make the tabunshick a present, that he may take care not to injure the animal in catching it." This last caution is by no means to be neglected, for a horse, carelessly caught, may be lamed for several weeks; and as the horse is never caught till the bargain has been concluded, any injury done to the animal is the buyer's business, not the seller's. If, on the other hand, the tabunshick be satisfied with the fee given him, he goes about his

task in a much more methodical manner. The sling is thrown gently over the neck of the designated steed, but the latter is not thrown with the jerk to the ground. He is allowed for a little while to prance about at the full length of his tether, till his first fright be over. Gradually the wild animal becomes reconciled to the unwonted restraint, and the buyer leads him away quietly to his stable, where it will often take a year's tuition to cure him of the vicious habits acquired on the Steppe.

After saying so much of the tabunshick, it will be but fair to give some account of the life led by the riotous animals committed to his charge. During what is called the fine season, from Easter to October, the tabooon remains grazing day and night in the Steppe.

During the other six months of the year, the horses remain under shelter at night, and are driven out only in the day, when they must scrape away the snow for themselves, to get at the scanty grass underneath. When we say the horses remain under shelter, it must not be supposed that the shelter in question resembles in any way an English stable. The shelter alluded to consists of a space of ground enclosed by an earthen mound, with now and then something like a roof towards the north, to keep off the cold wind. There the poor creatures must defend themselves, as



SIR ROBERT GILLESPIE'S DARING FEAT.

well as they can against the merciless Boreas, who comes to them unchecked in his course all the way from the pole. To a stranger it is quite harrowing to see the noble animals, in severe weather, in one of these unprotected enclosures. The stallions and the stronger beasts, take possession of the shed; the timid and feeble stand in groups about the wall, and creep closely together, in order to impart a little warmth to each other. Nor is it from cold that they have most to suffer on these occasions. Early in winter they still find a little autumnal grass under the snow, and the tabunshick scatters a little hay about the stable to help them to amuse the tedious hours of night. The customary improvidence of a Russian establishment, however, seldom allows a sufficient stock of hay, to be laid in for the winter. As the season advances, hay grows scarce, and must be reserved for the more valuable coach and saddle horses, and the tabunshick is obliged to content himself with a portion of the dry reeds and straw stored up for fuel. For these he has soon to battle it with the cook and the stove-heaters, whose interest never fails to outweigh that of the poor taboo horses. These, if the winter last beyond the average term, are often reduced to the thatch of the roofs, and sometimes even eat away one another's tails and manes; and that in a country where every

year more grass is burnt during the summer, than would suffice to provide a profusion of hay, for a century of winters!—It will hardly be matter of surprise to any one, to learn that the winter is a season of sickness and death to the horses of the Steppe. After the mildest winter, the poor creatures come forth, a troop of sickly looking skeletons; but when the season has been severe, or unusually long, more than half of them, perhaps, have sunk under their sufferings, or have been so reduced in strength that the ensuing six months are hardly sufficient to restore them to their wonted spirits. The year 1833 was remarkably destructive to the taboos, and they had not recovered from its effects five years afterwards, when I last visited the Steppe. In such years of famine, the most enormous prices are sometimes paid for hay; yet every careful agriculturist may secure his cattle against such sufferings, by a little industry and forethought. In the proper season he may have as much hay as he pleases, for the mere trouble of cutting it; and such is the dryness of the climate during summer, that the hay may always be carried home, and stacked within a few hours after it has been mown.

From the hardships of an ordinary winter, the horses quickly recover amid the abundance of spring.

A profusion of young grass covers the ground as soon as the snow has melted away. The crippled spectres that stalked about a few weeks before, with wasted limbs, and drooping heads, are as wild and mischievous at the end of the first month, as though they had never experienced the inconvenience of a six months' fast. The stallions have already begun to form their separate factions in the taboon, and the neighing, bounding, prancing, gallopping, and fighting, goes on merrily from the banks of the Danube to the very heart of Mongolia.

In a taboon of a thousand horses, there are generally fifteen or twenty stallions, and four or five hundred brood mares. The stallions, and particularly the old ones, consider themselves the rightful lords of the community. They exercise their authority with very little moderation, and desperate battles are often fought among them, apparently for the mere honour of the championship. In almost every taboon there is one stallion who, by the rule of his hoof, has established a sort of supremacy, to which his comrades tacitly submit. Factions, cabals, and intrigues are not wanting. Sometimes there will be a general coalition against some particular stallion, who, if he get into a quarrel, is immediately set upon by ten or a dozen at once, and has no chance but to run for it. There is seldom a taboon without two or three of

these objects of public animosity, who may be seen with a small troop of mares grazing apart from the main body of the herd.

The most tremendous battles are fought when two taboons happen to meet. In general, the tabunshicks are careful to keep at a respectful distance from each other; but sometimes they are away from their duty, and sometimes, when a right of pasturage is disputed, they bring their herds together out of sheer malice. The mares and foals on such occasions keep aloof, but their furious lords rush to battle with an impetuosity, of which those who are accustomed to see the horse only in a domesticated state, can form but a poor conception. The enraged animals lash their tails, and erect their manes like angry lions; their hoofs rattle against each other with such violence, that the noise can be heard at a considerable distance; they fasten on one another with their teeth like tigers; and their screamings and howlings are more like those of the wild beasts of the forests, than like any sounds ever heard from a tame horse. The victorious party is always sure to carry away a number of captive mares in triumph; and the exchange of prisoners is an affair certain to bring the tabunshicks and their men by the ears, if they have been able to keep themselves out of the battle till then.

The spring, though in so many respects a season of enjoyment, is not without its drawbacks. The wolves, also, have to indemnify themselves for the severe fast of the winter, and are just as desirous as the horses to get themselves into good condition again. The foals, too, are just then most delicate, and a wolf will any day prefer a young foal, to a sheep, or a calf. The wolf accordingly is constantly prowling about the taboo during the spring, and the horses are bound to be always prepared to do battle, in defence of the younger members of the community. The wolf, as the weaker party, trusts more to cunning than strength. For a party of wolves openly to attack a taboo at noon-day, would be to rush upon certain destruction; and, however severely the wolf may be pressed by hunger, he knows his own weakness too well, to venture on so absurd an act of temerity. At night, indeed, if the taboo happen to be a little scattered, and the wolves in tolerable numbers, they will sometimes attempt a rush, and a general battle ensues. An admirable spirit of coalition then displays itself among the horses. On the first alarm, stallions and mares come charging up to the threatened point, and attack the wolves with an impetuosity, that often puts the prowlers to instant flight. Soon, however, if they feel themselves sufficiently numerous, they return, and

hover about the taboon, till some poor foal straggle a few yards from the main body, when it is seized by the enemy, while the mother, springing to its rescue, is nearly certain to share the same fate. Then it is that the battle begins in real earnest. The mares form a circle, within which the foals take shelter. We have seen pictures in which the horses are represented in a circle, presenting their hind hoofs to the wolves, who thus appear to have the free choice to fight, or to let it alone. Such pictures are the mere result of imagination, and bear very little resemblance to the reality; for the wolf has, in general, to pay much more dearly for his partiality to horseflesh. The horses, when they attack wolves, do not turn their tails towards them, but charge upon them in a solid phalanx, tearing them with their teeth, and trampling on them with their feet. The stallions do not fall into the phalanx, but gallop about with streaming tails, and curled manes, and seem to act, at once, as generals, trumpeters, and standard bearers. When they see a wolf, they rush upon him with reckless fury, mouth to mouth, or if they use their feet as weapons of defence, it is always with the front, and not the hinder hoof, that the attack is made. With one blow the stallion often kills his enemy, or stuns him. If so, he snatches the body up with his teeth,

and flings it to the mares, who trample upon it till it becomes hard to say what kind of animal the skin belonged to. If the stallion, however, fail to strike a home blow at the first onset, he is likely to fight a losing battle, for eight or ten hungry wolves fasten on his throat, and never quit him till they have torn him to the ground : and if the horse be prompt and skilful in attack, the wolf is not deficient in sagacity, but watches for every little advantage, and is quick to avail himself of it ; but let him not hope, even if he succeed in killing a horse, that he will be allowed leisure to pick the bones : the tabooon never fails to take ample vengeance, and the battle almost invariably terminates in the complete discomfiture of the wolves, though not, perhaps, till more than one stallion has had a leg permanently disabled, or has had his side marked for life with the impress of his enemy's teeth.

These grand battles happen but seldom, and when they do occur, it is probably always against the wolf's wish. His system of warfare is a predatory one, and his policy is rather to surprise outposts, than to meditate a general attack. He trusts more to his cunning than his strength. He will creep cautiously through the grass, taking special care to keep to leeward of the tabooon, and will remain concealed in ambush, till he perceive a mare and her foal grazing

a little apart from the rest. Even then he makes no attempt to spring upon his prey, but keeps creeping nearer and nearer, with his head leaning on his fore feet, and wagging his tail in a friendly manner, to imitate, as much as possible, the movements and gestures of a watchdog. ... If the mare, deceived by the treacherous pantomime, venture near enough to the enemy, he will spring at her throat, and despatch her before she have time to raise an alarm; then, seizing on the foal, he will make off with his booty, and be out of sight perhaps before either herd or herdsman suspect his presence. It is not often, however, that the wolf succeeds in obtaining so easy a victory. If the mare detect him, an instant alarm is raised, and should the tabunshick be near, the wolf seldom fails to enrich him with a skin, for which the fur merchant is at all times willing to pay his ten or twelve rubles. The wolf's only chance, on such occasions, is to make for the first ravine, down which he rolls head foremost, a gymnastic feat that the tabunshick on his horse cannot venture to imitate.

As the summer draws on, the wolf becomes less troublesome to the taboo; but a season now begins of severe suffering for the poor horses, who have more perhaps to endure from the thirst of summer, than from the hunger of winter. The heat becomes in-

tolerable, and shade is nowhere to be found, save what the animals can themselves create, by gathering together in little groups, each seeking to place the body of his neighbour between himself and the burning rays of a merciless sun. The tabunshick often lays himself in the centre of the group, for he also has nowhere else a shady couch to hope for.

The autumn again is a season of enjoyment. The plains are anew covered with green, the springs yield once more an abundant supply of water, and the horses gather strength at this period of abundance, to prepare themselves for the sufferings and privations of winter. In autumn, for the first time in the year, the tabooon is called on to work, but the work is not much more severe than the exertions which the restless creatures are daily imposing upon themselves, while romping and rioting about on the Steppe. The work in question is the thrashing of the corn.

A thrashing-floor, of several hundred yards square, is made, by cutting away the turf, and beating the ground into a hard, solid surface. The whole is enclosed by a railing, with a gate to let the horses in and out. On such a floor, supposing the tabooon to consist of a thousand horses, five hundred score of sheaves will be laid down at once. The tabooon is then formed into two divisions, and five hundred steeds

are driven into the enclosure, stallions, mares, foals, and all, for when in, the more riotous they are the better the work will be done. The gate is closed, and then begins a ball of which it requires a lively imagination to conceive a picture. The drivers act as musicians, and their formidable harabicks are the fiddles that keep up the dance without intermission.

The horses terrified, partly by the crackling straw under their feet, and partly by the incessant cracking of the whip over their heads, dart half frantic from one extremity to the other of their temporary prison. Millions of grains are flying about in the air, and the labourers without have enough to do to toss back the sheaves that are flung over the railing by the prancing, hard working thrashers within. This continues for about an hour. The horses are then let out, the corn turned, and the same performance repeated three times before noon. By that time a thousand sheffel of corn have been thrashed, after a fashion that looks more like a holiday diversion, than a hard day's work; but in such an operation, more corn is lost than is gained on many large farms in Germany.





EQUESTRIAN EXPLOITS OF THE CIRCASSIANS.



CHAPTER VII.

THE COSSACKS—THE CIRCASSIANS—THE MAMELUKES.

UNDER the name of Cossacks of the Bug, of the Don, of the Ural, of Orenburg, of Astrakhan—Cossacks of the Black Sea—and Siberian Cossacks—this hardy and spirited race is disseminated over all the southern portions of European and Asiatic Russia. Every man of them, between the age of fifteen and fifty, is a soldier, eager for war, and ready to engage in it, no matter at what extremity of the earth. The Russian empire is undoubtedly indebted to these tribes for the vast extension of its dominion; and Europe has to thank them for the preservation of her civilization, when threatened by the ruthless Tartar invaders. Nature seems to have fitted the Cossack to become the conqueror of the Tribes of the Desert by endowments as peculiar as those which enable the

camel to traverse it. Distance and climate vanish before his wandering and adventurous spirit: the regions where the burning sun destroys all life and vegetation, or those where "the frost burns froze and cold produces the effect of fire," have never stayed his purpose, or arrested his onward march. With singular versatility he adapts himself to all outward circumstances; as occasion requires, he combines with his warlike profession the labours of the husbandman, the fisher, the herdsman, and the trader, and readily abandons one character to adopt the other whenever it may be needful. It is not only at the point of the lance he has subdued the wild inhabitants of so large a portion of the globe; but by his wonderful facility of adapting himself to the customs of the wilderness, and establishing a commercial intercourse with its fiercest hordes. It required a mixture of the reckless and wandering spirit of the sons of Ishmael, with the intense love of gain peculiar to the children of Israel, both of which his character exhibits, to form the wandering merchant, who could trade and defend his merchandise, and who would penetrate, to effect his purpose, a thousand miles away from his station, either towards the hyperborean regions, or through the parched plains of the naked Steppes.

A Russian Tsar might speedily collect from

amongst this people a larger and more formidable force of cavalry than the whole of united Europe could bring together; and in all the regular cavalry of the Russian line, there never was a horseman, however laboriously drilled, whom the untutored Cossack would not charge, wheel round, and overcome, though armed *cap-a-pie*, with his mere *nagaica*, or whip. The Cossacks are invaluable as light cavalry; they are the most daring and intelligent foragers in the world, who take care of themselves by instinct, and without taxing the foresight or the ingenuity of the general. Spreading on every side, they strike terror into the neighbourhood, and render it almost impossible to surprise a Russian force. Brought up amongst turbulent tribes, the vigilant Cossack never exposes himself to be taken unawares, as all other light troops do, when scattered abroad; and thus he can act even in the midst of a guerilla peasantry.

France still remembers with shuddering rage the two irruptions of those terrible barbarians upon her soil. The fearful image of another Cossack invasion has been embodied by Beranger, the greatest poet of France, in his "Chant du Cosaque," thus vigorously translated by "Father Prout:"—

Come, arouse thee up, my gallant horse, and bear thy rider on !
 The comrade thou, and the friend I trow, of the dweller on the Don :
 Pillage and death have spread their wings ; 'tis the hour to hie thee forth,
 And with thy hoofs an echo wake to the trumpets of the North.
 Nor gems, nor gold do men behold upon thy saddle tree ;
 But earth affords the wealth of lords for thy master and for thee.
 Then proudly neigh, my charger grey ! Oh ! thy chest is broad and
 ample.

And thy hoofs shall prance o'er the fields of France, and the pride of
 her heroes trample.

Europe is weak, she hath grown old, her bulwarks are laid low ;
 She is loath to hear the voice of war, she shrinketh from a foe :
 Come, in our turn, let us sojourn in her goodly haunts of joy,
 In the pillared porch to wave the torch, and her palaces destroy :
 Proud as when first thou slak'st thy thirst in the flow of conquered
 Seine,

Ay, thou shalt lave within that wave thy blood-red flank again :

Then proudly neigh, &c.

Kings are beleaguered on their thrones by their own vassal crew,
 And in their den quake noblemen, and priests are bearded too.
 And loud they yelp for the Cossack's help to keep their bondsmen down,
 And they think it meet, while they kiss our feet, to wear a tyrant's crown.
 The sceptre now to my lance shall bow, and the crosier and the cross,
 All shall bend alike, when I lift my pike, and aloft that sceptre toss.

Then proudly neigh, &c.

In a night of storm, I have seen a form, and the figure was a giant,
 And his eye was bent on the Cossack's tent, and his look was all defiant.
 Kingly his crest, and toward the West with his battleaxe he pointed ;
 And the form I saw was—ATTILA—of this earth the scourge anointed :
 From the Cossack's camp let the horseman's tramp the coming crash
 announce ;

Let the vulture whet its beak sharp set on the carrion field to pounce !

And fiercely neigh, &c.

What boots old Europe's boasted fame, on which she sets reliance,
When the North shall launch its avalanche on her works of art and
science?

Hath she not wept her cities swept by our herds of swarming stal-
lions,

And tower and arch crushed in the march of our barbarous battallions?
Can we not wield our fathers' shield, the same war-hatchet handle?

Do our blades want length, or the reapers strength, for the harvest of
the Vandal?

Then fiercely neigh, my charger grey! Oh! thy chest is broad and
ample,

And thy hoofs shall prance o'er the fields of France, and the pride of
her heroes trample.

The horses of the Cossacks, bred on the Steppes, though far inferior to those of the Circassians, are, nevertheless, a serviceable race, strong-boned, well-limbed, and with a good proportion of blood; though their forms are angular and inelegant, and their necks ewed, they are fast and hardy. The Cossacks, like all equestrian nations, ride with very short stirrups, and they use only the snaffle bridle.

Why is it that all the regular armies of Europe, including that of England, have adopted a style of riding which has no one advantage except that of pleasing the eye, and, in reality, only the eye of those unacquainted with the true principles of equitation? A rider sitting bolt upright, with his legs at full stretch, is in the worst possible position for grasping the animal's body by the pressure of his thighs, knees,

and calves, for exercising an easy control over the mouth, and favouring the efforts of the horse by the motions of the rider's body. According to all the varieties of the long or military system of riding, the horse requires as much teaching as the rider; and nearly every horse, of a vigorous and spirited breed, is ruined by this course of teaching. "All equestrian nations ride with the bended leg, or as it is commonly termed, *short*, simply because experience has taught them its advantages. The English jockies, fox-hunters, and steeple-chasers, who get the utmost speed out of their horse, who teach him to traverse, and assist him over the most tremendous leaps, all ride short. The South American Indians—men who live and die, as it were, on the backs of their horses—the Moors of the coast of Barbary—and the Bedouin Arabs of the Desert, all ride short. The extinct body of Mamelukes, who were Circassians, and the tribes of Circassians now inhabiting the Caucasus—the most dextrous men in the universe, in the use of their arms, and the management of their horses, for all the purposes of combat; who stop them in their wildest gallop, who wheel them round a hat, and who, not riding more than an average of eleven stone, can lift from the saddle the most brawny and burly riding-master as if he were a child—these men not only use

nothing but a snaffle, but actually double up the leg and thigh almost in the following manner: < One moment's examination of the limb in this position, will, by showing the muscles, both of the calf and inner thigh, brought to their utmost prominence, at once explain how singularly the powers of adhesion must be increased by it.

“The seat of a Cossack, who is accustomed to back a horse from his earliest childhood, is about as short as that of the English fox-hunter. It is amusing, in the sham fights of Krasnoe Zelo, to see the contemptuous ease with which a single Cossack forager, will disengage himself from a dozen or two of cuirassiers of the guard, raining the blows of his lance-shaft about their helms and shoulders, loosening in their saddles those who attempt to stop him, and then getting away from them like a bird, with a laugh of derision in answer to the curses they mutter after him.”—*Revelations of Russia.*

From the perpetual snows of Mount Elbrouz, the highest peak of the Caucasus, two rivers take their rise, the Kouban and the Terek. The former flows westward to the Black Sea, while the latter runs in an opposite direction into the Caspian. The two together form a natural barrier against the inroads of the Caucasian mountaineers, who are hemmed in between

the respective shores of those great waters. But this barrier, probably, all the Russian forces would be unable to defend, were it not for the Tchernomorskie, or Black Sea Cossacks, the most daring and warlike of their nation, and alone fitted to cope with the Circassians, to whom only they are inferior. Though in the predatory excursions, which have desolated both sides of the border, these Cossacks have, from time to time, carried off and intermarried with Circassian women, many of whose customs, habits, and part of whose language and national costume they have adopted; still the semi-relationship between the two races, has in nowise softened the unutterable hatred they bear each other. Nothing but the fierce hostility of the Cossacks could preserve all the Russian establishments on the northern bank of the Kouban, from utter destruction, by the inroads of the mountaineers, whose fleet and vigorous horses, bear them vast distances with inconceivable rapidity. Even now, guarded as it is, they sometimes force the passage, and mark their track with fire and blood, retaliating on the flat lands the injustice which the Russian columns have inflicted on their own hills and dales.

The Circassians are not tall in stature, but exquisitely proportioned, and of a strength and agility, which constant exercise has wonderfully developed.

The costume of these brave mountaineers is such as to set off the nervous, though delicate, symmetry of their make. It consists of a close-fitting frock coat, with rows of cartridge pockets sewn upon the breast, and tight trowsers, both vestments being generally of some subdued and sober hue. All the magnificence displayed is in the arms and the trappings of the steed. The headdress worn in peace, is a round cap, surrounded by a thick border of black or white sheepskin fur. The war garb, however, in which the Circassian is oftenest seen, is remarkable by the addition of an iron helm, surmounted by a spike, in lieu of a plume; a shirt of exquisitely finished mail, falling from the helmet over his shoulders, like a lady's lace veil; and steel armlets, which seem to form part of the forgotten gauntlet, worn by the knights of old.

Such is the outward appearance of that hardy and intrepid race of warriors, who have, for fifty years, maintained inviolate the freedom of their mountain land, withstood the continuous efforts of Russia, and baffled all the force and cunning of that gigantic empire. Their small but beautiful horses, which are thoroughbred (that is, derived in almost uncontaminated purity from the Arab), are so accustomed to their rugged mountains as to carry the rider over places where he

could not scramble on foot. Sure-footed and agile as the chamois, they gallop down the most precipitous descents, springing from rock to rock in a manner incredible to those who have not witnessed with their own eyes how the nature of the horse adapts itself to the localities in which he is bred.

As the tribes of the Caucasus are often at war with each other, Russia succeeds occasionally in procuring a hollow show of submission from some of them. The Emperor has even a regiment of Circassian cavalry, all the members of which are princes or nobles, and may be considered in the light of hostages. Even under the yoke of foreign service, these men retain their fiery independent spirit, and the imperial despot himself finds it necessary to treat them with much indulgence; for there is an indomitable obstinacy about them, with which it is considered most politic not to meddle. They mix very little with the Russians, but live exclusively in their own circle, exciting an amusing degree of awe on the tame population which surrounds them. The Russian, in all his pride of uniform, whether he be officer, soldier, or policeman, has a salutary dread of interfering with this fierce race, so sensitive to insult, and so prompt to revenge it. In the street, whenever you see the crowd carefully making way,

you may be sure there is either a general, a policeman, or a Circassian coming.

Every shot from the rifles of these wild riders tells ; and though their pistols are but indifferent, yet at full gallop they seldom miss their aim at a piece of paper lying on the ground. Some of the more dextrous hit with equal certainty a silver ruble piece, or strike the earth so close to it as to make it fly into the air. With the rifle they practise the Parthian mode of warfare, shooting behind them as they fly ; and, in order to be able to turn round more readily, and place themselves in the only position in which it is possible to acquire any accuracy of aim from the back of a galloping horse, they ride with one stirrup longer than the other. They also ride with a loose rein, which is found to be indispensable to secure the safe footing of their steeds over the precipitous ground which they traverse, because it leaves the animal to trust entirely to his own judgment and exertion. But on the plain this habit greatly impairs its speed, as the natural tendency of the horse is to take short rapid steps instead of long sweeping strides, which he can only venture on when accustomed, by the assisting hand of his rider, to gather himself together like the bent bow, ready for fresh distention.

The warfare waged by the Russians against the

mountaineers of the Caucasus is one of blockade merely; the invading armies have never felt strong enough to advance beyond the protection of their forts in the low grounds, or to make any decisive inroads into the territory of the natives. Death or captivity is the invariable fate of every Russian bold enough to separate two hundred yards from his column, even if no enemy should have previously been in sight. Often, when a Russian force is on the march, the Circassians dash through the lines and kill or carry off the officers, who consider all resistance so hopeless that, on such occasions, they seldom offer any. The mountaineers, penetrating their line of skirmishers, have been seen thus to pull them from their horses, and dash away with them as a cat carries off a mouse.

The famous Mamelukes of Egypt, the last of whom were treacherously entrapped and murdered by the present viceroy, Mehemet Ali, were all of them natives of the Caucasus, who had been sold as slaves in their youth. Having been trained to arms, and emancipated, they continued to serve their patron, the Bey, as *children of his house*; and such was the singular constitution of this militia, that no man was admissible into it except as a purchased slave. Living in luxury, upon the wealth wrung from an oppressed

people, they were as insolent, turbulent, prodigal, and rapacious as any soldiery that ever existed ; but, at least, they were brave, and excellently skilled in the use of their weapons, which constituted the sole business of their lives. Their martial exercises are thus described by Volney:—"Every day, early in the morning, the greater part of them resort to a plain, outside of Cairo, and there, riding full speed, exercise themselves in drawing out their carbine expeditiously from the bandalier, discharging it with good aim, and then throwing it under their thigh, to seize a pistol, which they fire and throw over their shoulder, immediately firing a second and throwing it in the same manner, trusting to the string by which they are fastened, without losing time to return them to their place. The Beys, who are present, encourage them ; and whoever breaks the earthen vessel, which serves by way of butt, receives great commendations, and a reward in money. They practice also the use of the sabre, and especially the *coup de revers*, which cuts upwards, and is the most difficult to parry. Their blades are so keen, and they handle them so well, that many of them can cut a clew of wet cotton like a piece of butter. They likewise shoot with bows and arrows, though they no longer use them in battle. But their favourite exercise is throwing the djereed.

This word, which properly means a reed, is generally used to signify any staff thrown by the hand, after the manner of the Roman pilum. Instead of a staff, the Mamelukes make use of branches of the palm tree, fresh stripped; they are in form like the stalk of an artichoke, are four feet long, and weigh five or six pounds. Armed with these, the cavaliers enter the lists, and, riding full speed, throw them at each other from a considerable distance. The assailant, as soon as he has thrown, turns his horse, and his antagonist pursues and throws in his turn. The horses, accustomed to this exercise, second their masters so well that they seem also to share in the pleasure. But the pleasure is attended with danger; for some can dart the djereed with so much force as frequently to wound, and sometimes mortally. Ill-fated was the man who could not escape the djereed of Ali Bey!"

Baumgarten, an early traveller in the East, gives the following account of Mameluke exercises performed in presence of the Sultan, who sat in a balcony of the palace overlooking the field: "On the side of the castle, there was a large and plain field, which had been before prepared for this purpose; about the middle of which, on one side, there were three artificial hillocks of sand, about fifty paces distant from

one another; and on the top of each of them there was fixed a spear, bearing the mark which the archers were to shoot at; and the like was on the other side; so that in the middle betwixt them there was as much room left as might serve for six horses to run abreast. In this plain a great number of young men clad in richly-embroidered silk, with their usual light arms, mounted their sprightly horses, and began their games in this manner:—

First: They ran at full career betwixt the first two of these hillocks, and dextrously shot their arrows at the marks that were fixed to the tops of the spears, both on the right and left hand.

Next they rode in the same manner out between the other two, and filled the marks with their arrows.

Just so with the same speed they ran through the rest, and shot their arrows so artfully, that not one of them missed his aim.

After these young men had performed their parts, and had left none of the marks untouched, every one took his little spear that hung behind his back (as if they minded to act, not at a distance, but hand to hand), and retired a little out of the way, till the rest of the youth had performed as they had done. After which all of them, in the same order as they began, marched through the same way they had ridden, but now at a

slow pace, with their standards before them, as in triumph, till they came to the place from which they had set out, and after they had prepared themselves for another kind of exercise, came out again in a little time.

Some of them, while their horses were running with loose reins, rode up and down, shooting their arrows at the marks before and behind, some one, others two, and some three.

Others, while their horses were at their full speed, would leap off three times, and (the horse still running) mount again, and in the meantime be shooting their arrows, and never any of them miss his aim: others, not sitting in their saddles, but standing up, while the horse seemed to fly, would hit the mark exactly: others while their horses were at their full gallop, would thrice unbend their bows, and toss them about their heads like a whip, and again bend them, and shoot without ever missing the mark. Some of the riders would throw themselves three times backwards off their horses, and would vault into the saddle again, let the horse run as fast as he would, and in the meantime let fly their arrows and hit the mark as oft as they shot. Some would spring out of their saddles, that were fast tied to the horses, and would untie them, and then shoot: thrice they would

tie on their saddles, and as oft pierce the mark, the horse all the while running at his full speed. Sitting after their usual manner, they would jump behind their saddles, and let their heads hang down, then raise themselves up, and get into their saddles. Thrice they would do this, and as oft let fly their arrows without ever missing the mark. Or sitting in their saddles, they would lay their heads backwards on their horse's croup, and taking his tail, hold it in their teeth, then raise themselves up, and shoot as sure as ever they did.

Others would sit between drawn sharp pointed swords, three on either side, and in very thin clothes, so that if they had but budged, ever so little, to one side or the other, they must have been wounded; yet so dextrously did they move backwards and forwards, that (as if there had been danger on either side) they were always sure to pierce the mark.

Among all the young men who performed these exercises, there was only one found, who, with his feet loose, could stand upon the backs of two of the swiftest horses at their full speed, and let fly three arrows forwards and backwards. There was another, who could sit on a horse without a saddle or bridle, and at every mark spring up on his legs, and hit the marks, both on his right and left hand, and then sit

down again, repeating the same at the second and third marks, and thereby discovering an incredible agility and skilfulness at shooting. There was a third, who was the only one among them that could, while he was sitting on a bare-backed horse, so soon as ever he came to the marks, lay his back close to the horse's, then stretching his feet up in the air, start upon his feet in a moment, and fix his arrow in the mark.

At last, when the marks were quite loaded with arrows, the master of the youths, who was an aged, and grey haired man, taking the marks in his hand, first held them up as high as he could, then threw them down to the ground. Upon which his scholars showered down their lances and arrows upon them, as if they had been putting an end to the lives of their wounded enemies, and then went prancing up and down by way of triumph. Among these young men there were three, who fell from their horses; one of whom expiring as soon as he fell, lest a formal funeral might disorder the rest, was immediately carried off and buried. The other two being almost dead, were likewise carried off for fear of marring the show. The rest of these horsemen, that they might put an end to the games, taking their lances in their hands, and putting spurs to their horses, rode up to

the marks that were still remaining, and pierced them with their points like trophies. It was a fine sight to behold these tall young men, handsomely clothed and armed, with a wonderful address, performing those exercises on the back of a horse at his full speed, which others could hardly do standing on firm ground; and which were equally strange to see, and hard to be believed."





CHAPTER VIII.

BELA—A STORY OF THE CAUCASUS.

HAVING followed the Circassians in their transformed appearance as Egyptian Mamelukes, we now return from this digression, to their mountain homes. There is a tale by Lermontof, a young Russian author, who died prematurely about four years ago, in which the character and habit of the mountaineers are illustrated with great dramatic force. As the story, which is full of human interest, turns also in a great degree on the fortunes of a horse, it comes fairly within the scope of the present work; we shall therefore present it here in a condensed form. In the original it takes the shape of a conversation between the author, and the commandant of a Russian fort, on the Terek, a rough unlettered soldier, but a man of excellent heart. We shall

distinguish the two speakers in the dialogue, by their initials L. and M.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

M.—I was quartered, you see, with my company in the fort beyond the Terek—this was about five years ago. One autumn a party arrived with provisions, and accompanied by an officer, a young man of about five-and-twenty, who reported that he was ordered to remain with me in the fort. I could see at once from his appearance, and the freshness of his accoutrements, that he had not been long in the Caucasus; so I took him by the hand, and said ‘Very glad to see you; you will find your quarters here rather dull; however, we will be as sociable with each other as possible; so call me if you please by my plain name, Maxim Maximitch.’ His own, by the by, was Gregorii Alexandrovitch Petchorin. He was a very fine young fellow, I assure you, only a little odd. For instance, he would hunt the whole day long in rain and cold; every body else would be half frozen, and knocked up, but he not a bit. Another time he would sit in his room, and if a breath of air was stirring, he would declare he was chilled to the bones; if the window-shutter flapped to, he would start and turn pale, and

yet I have seen him dash at a wild boar all alone. Ay, he had very odd ways, surely, and he must have been very rich, for you never saw such a lot of costly things as he had with him. He stayed with me a full year, and good reason I have to remember that year, for it caused me a great deal of anxiety and sorrow ; but I will not think of that now.

There was a friendly prince residing about six versts from the fort, whose son, a lad about fifteen, was in the habit of visiting us every day, for one thing or another. Petchorin and I took a great liking to him. What a smart, nimble chap he was ! There was nothing he could not do. He could pick up his cap from the ground, or load and fire off his gun at full gallop. But there was one bad thing in him ; he had a desperate hankering after money. Gregorii Alexandrovitch once promised in joke, that he would give him a ducat, if he would steal him the best ram out of his father's flock—and what do you think ? the young scamp dragged him in to us the very next night by the horns. But if ever, as happened now and then, we took it into our heads to make fun of him, his eyes would flash fire, and his hand was on his dagger in an instant. O Asamat, I used to say to him, you will never wear a grey head on your shoulders, your unruly temper will be the ruin of you.

Once the old prince came in person to invite us to the wedding of his eldest daughter, and of course we could not civilly refuse. When we entered the hamlet, a pack of dogs ran at us barking furiously. The women hid themselves as soon as they saw us, and those whose faces we did get a glimpse of, were any thing but beauties. 'I had a much higher idea of the Circassian women,' said Petchorin to me. 'Have a little patience', said I, smiling, and keeping my thoughts to myself.

There was a great concourse already assembled in the prince's house. It is the custom, you are aware, among the Asiatics to keep open house for all comers on these occasions. They received us with all possible marks of respect, and led us into the guest chamber; but first I took care to notice privately where they put our horses, in case any thing should happen, you know.

L.—What are their marriage ceremonies?

M.—Nothing very remarkable. First, the mollah reads something out of the Koran, then presents are made to the young couple, and to all their relations; they eat, they drink *busa*; the *zhightofka* begins; and there is always some greasy rogue mounted on a lame old rip of a horse, to amuse the worshipful company with his grotesque capers, and his jokes. By and by,

when it grows dark, the ball, as we should call it, begins. An old beggar strums upon a three stringed instrument—I forget what they call it; the lads and lasses stand up in two rows opposite each other, clap hands and sing. A girl and a young man then step into the middle space, and sing alternate verses, just whatever comes into their heads, and the rest join in chorus. Petchorin and I were seated in the place of honour, and all of a sudden, our host's youngest daughter, a girl about sixteen, stepped up to my friend, and sang to him—what shall I call it?—a sort of compliment.

L.—But the words, the words,—do you happen to remember them?

M.—Well I believe they were something to this effect: 'Beautiful, in truth, are our young zhight dancers, and their caftans are richly adorned with silver; but the young Russian officer is more beautiful than they, and his laces are of gold. He towers among them like a poplar, but it is not his destiny to grow and flourish in our garden.' Petchorin rose and bowed, laying his hand on his forehead and his breast, and requested me to reply for him. I knew their language very well, and translated his answer.

When the girl had left us, I whispered my comrade, Well what say you now? What do you think

of that girl? 'Charming!' he exclaimed; 'what is her name?' 'Her name is Bela,' I answered. And beautiful indeed she was! tall, slender, with eyes as black as the gazelle's, that seemed to look into your very soul. Petchorin, completely captivated, never took his eyes off her, and she frequently shot a stolen glance upon him from beneath her jetty eyelashes. But Petchorin was not the only one whose gaze was riveted on the lovely princess: there was another pair of eyes in the corner of the room, that glared upon her incessantly, with passionate fire. I looked sharply that way, and recognized my old acquaintance, Kasbitch. Now things were in such a position, you must know, with respect to this man, that he could neither be regarded as decidedly friendly to the Russians, nor be pronounced decidedly the reverse. There were many suspicious against him, though nothing definite could ever be brought home to him. It often occurred, that he brought us sheep into the fort, and offered them at a low price; but he would never higggle: whatever price he asked first, we had always to give him, for he would sooner have let his head be chopped off, than bate a kopeck. It was whispered that he was fond of knocking about with the Abreks beyond the Kuban, and to say the truth of him, he had very much the cut of a robber: rather small, well knit, broad

shouldered, and as nimble as any wild cat! His Tartar frock, beshmet they call it, was always torn and patched, but his weapons were bright, and adorned with silver. And then his horse, it was renowned throughout all Kabarda, and a better it would certainly be impossible to conceive. It was not without reason, all the marauders envied him the possession of such an animal, and more than one attempt was made to steal it from him, but never with success. I can see that horse now, as plainly as if it stood before me, black as pitch, its limbs slender and strong as steel, its eyes a match for Bela's; and then for bottom! it would clear its full fifty versts at full speed; and so tractable, that it would follow its master like a dog, ay! it knew even what he said. Very often he did not even tether it. Take it for all in all, it was the very model of a robber's horse.

Kasbitch was more sullen that evening than usual, and I noticed that he had on a shirt of mail under his beshmet. It is not for nothing, thinks I, he wears that shirt of mail; he has something in his head, I'm sure.

The guest room was very close, and I went out of doors to breathe the fresh air. Night had now settled on the mountains, and the mists were creeping forth from the glens. The thought struck me I would go into

the shed where our horses stood, and see if they had fodder. I had an excellent horse with me, and more than one Kabardan had already looked at him with an approving eye ; so I thought a little caution could do no harm at all events.

Groping along the boarded wall, I suddenly heard voices. One of them I recognized instantly for that scamp Asamat's, our host's son ; the other person spoke less, and in a lower tone. What are they coshering about ? thought I ; not about my horse, is it ? With that I squatted down by the wall, determined not to lose a word ; but the noise of the singing, and the din within doors now and then drowned a part of the conversation in which I was so much interested.

'You have a splendid horse,' said Asamat. 'Were I master here, and had a herd of three hundred mares, I would freely give the half of them for your courser, Kasbitch.'

Aha, Kasbitch ! said I to myself ; and I called to mind the shirt of mail.

'Ay,' replied Kasbitch, after a moment's silence, 'there is not his like in all Kabarda. Once—this was beyond the Terek—I set out with the Abreks to capture Russian herds of horses. The attempt was a failure, and we scattered, one this way, another that. Four Cossacks were after me. I could hear the

villains shout behind me, and before me was a thick forest. I bent down in the saddle, commended myself to Allah, and for the first time in my life dealt my horse a blow with my whip. He darted like a bird through the branches, my clothes were torn in shreds, and the twigs lashed me in the face. My horse leaped over the stumps of trees, and burst the thick underwood asunder with his chest. As far as myself was concerned, I should have done better to have turned my horse loose in the copse, and hid myself in the wood, but I could not part from him, and the prophet rewarded me. Some bullets whistled over my head, and I heard my pursuers close behind me. Suddenly a deep chasm yawned before me—my courser recoiled on his haunches—and leaped. His hind feet slipped on the further bank, and he hung on by his fore feet. I dropped the rein, and let myself fall into the chasm: that saved him, he regained his footing. The Cossacks saw the whole affair, but none of them thought of descending in search of me. They believed, no doubt, I must have broken my neck, and I heard them dash after my horse to catch him. The blood curdled in my breast. I crept through the deep grass along the bottom of the channel, and looked out: the wood ended there, and some of the Cossacks were just riding out of it into the open country, and I saw my

Karagos running straight towards them. The whole pack made at him with a yell; he turned; they followed him a long, long while; and one in particular was twice near flinging the noose over his neck. I shook from head to foot, shut my eyes, and began to pray. Some moments afterwards I opened them again, and behold, there goes my Karagos, with his tail at full stretch, flying like the wind, and the Cossacks creeping away one after the other, on their jaded horses far off towards the Steppe. By Allah! every word I tell you is the truth, the strict truth! I staid in the chasm till a late hour of the night. All at once—guess what, Asamat!—I heard a horse running along the bank, snorting, whinnying, and pawing the ground. I knew the voice of my Karagos, and it was he, indeed, my trusty comrade! Since that day we are inseparable.'

And I could hear him patting his horse's polished neck, and calling him by all the endearing names he could think of.

'If I had a herd of a thousand mares,' cried Asamat, 'I would give them every one for your Karagos.'

'Like enough; but I would not let him go for them,' said Kasbitch, with indifference.

'Hark ye, Kasbitch,' said Asamat coaxingly. 'You are a good fellow, you are a brave zhighit; my father,

you see, fears the Russians, and will not let me go to the mountains; now give me your horse, and I will do every thing you desire. I will steal you my father's best rifle, his best shashka—any thing you will. His shashka is a genuine gurma: only hold it out in your hand, and the blade strikes into the flesh of its own accord; and his shirt of mail is as good as yours every bit.'

Kasbitch made no answer.

'The first time I saw your horse,' continued Asamat, 'as it whirled round beneath you, and dashed away with expanded nostrils, the stones flashing fire beneath its hoofs, something, I know not what, seized hold of my soul, and from that moment I could never bear to look at any other. I scorned my father's best and fleetest steeds, I should have been ashamed to be seen on the back of one of them. I was completely overcome with grief, and would sit pining the livelong day on a rock, and every moment I had before my eyes your black horse, with his stately step, his back straight and smooth as an arrow, and his bright eyes that looked into mine, as if he would speak to me. I shall die Kasbitch, if you will not let me have him.'

Asamat's voice faltered, and I fancied I heard him crying. Now I must tell you Asamat was a most

hardened and vicious chap, from whom there was no forcing a tear, even when he was a nursed child. A scornful laugh was the only answer to his tears.

‘Hear me,’ said Asamat, with a firm voice: ‘My mind is made up for any thing—every thing! Shall I steal my sister for you? How she dances! How she sings! and she embroiders in gold, that it is a wonder to see! The Turkish padisha hardly possesses such a girl—Well! Only say the word. Wait for me to-morrow night in the glen yonder, by the waterfall; I will take her that way as if to the neighbouring hamlet, and she is yours. What say you, is not Bela well worth your courser?’

Kasbitch was silent for a long, long while; at last instead of replying, he began to chant an old ditty, half aloud:

‘Down in our hamlet many are the beauteous maidens
Stars are gleaming in the dark heaven of their eyes.
Sweet it were to own their love, a lot, indeed, to envy!
But sweeter still than this is young and lusty freedom.
For gold you may buy beauties, ay, as many as you will,
But a steed of highest mettle is a treasure beyond price,
Swift as the wind he flies over the Steppes,
And fickleness and falsehood have no place in him.’

It was to no purpose Asamat importuned him to accept his proposal, and wept, and raved, and swore; Kasbitch lost patience at last.

‘Go along, silly boy!’ he said. ‘You ride my horse! With the first three steps he would fling you off, and break your neck on the stones.’

‘Me!’ screamed Asamat, in a fury, and the boy’s dagger clashed on the coat of mail. But a vigorous hand shook him off, and dashed him with such violence against the boarded wall that it rocked with the blow. Here’s a pretty piece of work! thought I; so I hurried to the stall, bridled our horses, and led them to the backdoor. In two minutes there was a tremendous row in the house. What happened there was briefly this: Asamat rushed in, with his beshmet torn, crying out that Kasbitch wanted to murder him. All present sprang up, seized their weapons, and the brawl began. All were shouting, blows, and firing; but Kasbitch was already in the saddle, and broke, like an incarnate fiend, through the throng, brandishing his shashka. Petchorin wanted to see how it would end, but he took my advice, and we rode straight home.

L.—And how did it fare with Kasbitch?

M.—The usual luck of these fellows; he got clear off whether wounded or not, Heaven only knows! They have as many lives as cats, these robbers. I saw one of them, for instance, in battle, pierced like a sieve with bayonet holes, yet still laying about him with his shashka. [The captain paused awhile, and then con-

tinued, stamping on the ground]: One thing I shall never forgive myself: the devil put it into my head, when I got back to the fort, to tell Petchorin all I had overheard in the shed. He smiled, with such a sly air,—he had his reasons for it, as you shall see.

Asamat came to the fort some three or four days after the wedding, and, as usual, made for Petchorin's quarters, where he was always pampered with dainties. I was present: the conversation turned on horses, and Petchorin began to cry up Kasbitch's horse, it was so spirited, so handsome, so like an antelope—in short, by his account, there was not such another on the face of the earth. The little Tartar's eyes began to glow, but Petchorin pretended not to notice this. I turned the talk to other subjects, but he somehow contrived always to bring it back to Kasbitch's horse. The same thing invariably occurred as often as Asamat visited us. At the end of three weeks I could plainly perceive that the boy was growing pale and wasted, just as the effects of love are described in romances. Curious!

Now it was not till some time after, do you see, that I got at the rights of this whole piece of roguery. Petchorin tantalized him to that degree, that he was ready to drown himself. At last he said to him, 'I see, Asamat, you have taken a great fancy

to this horse ; but you have no more chance of ever getting him than of seeing the back of your own neck. Tell me, though, what would you give the man who should procure you the animal ?'

' Any thing he desired,' replied Asamat.

' If that is the case, I am your man ; you shall have the horse, but on one condition—swear that you will fulfil it.'

' I swear ! You, too, swear.'

' Very good. I swear the horse shall be yours ; only you must give me your sister Bela in return. The bargain I think will be a profitable one for you.' Asamat was silent.

' You will not do it ? . As you please. I thought you were a full grown man, but I see you are still only a boy. It is too soon for you to back a horse like'—

Asamat was on fire. ' But my father ?' said he.

' Does he never leave home ?'

' Well, he does, sometimes.'

' Then it is done ?'

' Done !' whispered Asamat, as pale as death.

' The time ?'

' The first time Kasbitch comes here. He promised to bring ten sheep to the fort. Leave the rest to me. Do you do your part, Asamat.'

And thus they arranged the whole affair between them, no very creditable affair, to say the least of it. I expressed this opinion subsequently to Petchorin; but he merely replied, that the barbarian Circassian girl was very well off to get so good a husband as himself, for according to the way of thinking of her own people, he was in every respect her husband; and that Kasbitch was a robber who deserved to be punished. Judge for yourself, what answer I could make to that? But, at that time, I knew nothing of the preconcerted bargain. Well, behold you! Kasbitch came at last, and asked, did we want sheep or honey? I desired him to bring them on the following day. 'Asamat,' said Petchorin, 'to-morrow Karagos will be in my possession; if Bela is not here this night, you shall never see the horse.'

'Good,' said Asamat, and off he ran to the hamlet. In the evening, Petchorin armed himself and rode out of the fort. How they managed the thing I cannot tell; all I know is that the sentinel saw a girl laid crossways on Asamat's saddle, her hands and feet bound, and her head muffled up in a thick veil.

Next day Kasbitch came with ten sheep for sale. After putting up his horse he came in to me. I entertained him with tea, because, though he was a robber,

we were on terms of hospitality. We were chatting about one thing and another, when all on a sudden, I saw Kasbitch start and change colour. 'What is the matter?' said I.

'My horse! my horse!' he cried, trembling all over.

'Well, I did hear the sound of a horse. Some Cossack, I suppose'—

'No! Russian treachery! treachery!' he bellowed, dashing headlong out of doors, like a wild panther. In two bounds he was in the open air. The sentinel at the gate levelled his piece at him, and barred his way: he leaped over the soldier's gun, and ran with all his might and main along the road. The dust was flying at a distance—Asamat was galloping away on the back of Karagos. Kasbitch uncased [his gun as he ran, and fired, then stood motionless till he had assured himself he had missed his aim; then howled with rage, flung the weapon from his hand, shattering it against the stones, and began to cry like a child. Numbers had gathered around him from the fort—he heeded nothing: they lingered with him, tried to talk with him, and at last left him. I ordered the money for the sheep to be laid beside him: he never touched it, but lay with his face on the ground like a dead man. Would you believe it? He lay there

the whole livelong night. It was not till next morning he returned to the fort, and entreated our people to tell him the name of the thief. The sentinel, who had seen Asamat untie the horse and gallop away with him, did not think it necessary to make any secret of the matter. Kasbitch's eyes flashed fire at that name, and, turning on his heel, he made straight for the hamlet where Asamat's father lived. But he did not find him there. He had gone from home for six days; and that was one of the helping circumstances of the plot, for otherwise Asamat could hardly have carried off his sister.

But when the father returned, there was neither son nor daughter in the place. The thieving villain! he well knew he could never save his neck if he let himself be caught. So from that hour he was never seen again. Probably he joined some band of Abreks, or had his hot head cooled for him beyond the Terek or the Kuban. His route was in that direction. The father soon afterwards paid the penalty of his son's crime. Kasbitch never doubted but that Asamat had stolen the horse with the privity and consent of his father; at least so I conjecture. Accordingly he lay in lurk one day, by the road, some two versts from the hamlet. The old man was returning from a fruitless search after his daughter; his *usdens*

(retinue of vassals) were some distance behind him. It was dusk, and he was riding slowly along, as a man in deep grief might do, when Kasbitch sprang, like a cat, from behind a bush, leaped up behind the old man, stabbed and flung him on the ground, then seized the reins and away! Some usdens saw the whole proceeding from a hill, and hotly pursued the murderer, but in vain.

[Honest Maxim Maximitch severely remonstrated with his subaltern when he became aware of the shameful act the latter had committed; but the mischief was irreparable, and the good-natured captain contented himself with trying to make the best of a bad business. Bela herself, after her first resentful emotions had subsided, yielded to her fate, and even acknowledged that since she first saw Petchorin she had never ceased to think of him. The Captain continued thus]:

She was a charming girl, this Bela. I grew as attached to her, at last, as if she were my own daughter, and she was fond of me too. You must know I have no family; I have heard nothing these twelve years of my father and mother. Formerly I had not sufficient means to maintain a wife, and now, you know, the time is gone by when I could fairly think of the like; it was a godsend to

me, therefore, to have some one to spoil. She often sang to us, or danced Lesgish dances—and what a dancer! I have seen our ladies of the provinces—I was once at a ball of the nobles at Moscow, twenty years ago—but what was all I saw there compared with her! Petchorin dressed her out like a doll, with every thing that was costly and pretty. She grew more beautiful, too, with us, every day; it was wonderful. Her face and hands lost their sunburnt hue, a soft tinge of red appeared on her cheeks—and how merry she could be, and what tricks she would often play upon me, the darling wanton! God be gracious to her!

For four months every thing went on as well as heart could wish. Petchorin, as I believe I told you before, was uncommonly fond of the chase. Formerly all his delight was in the woods, after the wild boars and the deer, but now he hardly ever went outside the gates of the fort. All at once, however, I observed he was grown pensive, and would walk up and down the room with his hands behind his back. Then he went out one morning to shoot, without saying a word to any one, and stayed out the whole day. Presently this happened a second time, and then again and again. There's something wrong, thought I; I'll lay my life on it, a black cat has jumped between the pair.

[It was so. Petchorin's passion was beginning to cool, and Bela was growing unhappy. One day, when Petchorin was away hunting, she walked out with the captain on the ramparts.]

Our fort stood on high ground, and the view from the ramparts was very fine. On the one side was an open tract, bounded by ravines, beyond which was a wood, stretching up to the crest of the mountain; here and there hamlets were seen smoking, and horses grazing. On the other side ran a small stream scattering its spray over the thick copse that clothed a rocky hill, an offshoot from the main chain of the Caucasus. We sat on the angle of a bastion, so that we had a full view on both sides. Suddenly I saw a man ride out of the wood on a grey horse. He came towards us, stopped on the other side of the brook, and began to make his horse caper about as if he was mad. 'What the deuce is that?' said I. 'Look yonder, Bela, your eyes are younger than mine; what sort of a zhight is that? For whose amusement is he playing such antics?'

She looked towards the horseman, and cried out, 'It is Kasbitch! And that is my father's horse!' she said, grasping my hand. She trembled like an aspen leaf, and her eyes flashed. 'Ha! the robber!' cried I, and, looking more closely, I saw sure enough it was

Kasbitch with his swarthy features, and his clothes as ragged and dirty as ever.

‘Come here,’ said I, to the sentry; ‘look to your piece, and shoot me that fellow yonder. You shall have a silver ruble if you hit him.’ ‘Very well, your honour; but he never stops a moment in one spot.’ ‘Call to him to stand still,’ said I, laughing. ‘Holla, my good fellow,’ shouted the sentinel, beckoning to the horseman, ‘stand still a bit, will you? what do you keep wheeling about in that way for?’ Kasbitch actually stopped, and appeared to listen, thinking, probably, that we wanted to parley with him—but no such thing; my grenadier levelled—puff!—the piece flashed in the pan. Kasbitch struck the spur into his horse, and it made a side bound. Then, standing up in the stirrups, he shouted out something in his own tongue, shook his *nagaika* (whip) at us, and was off.

About four hours afterwards Petchorin came back from hunting. Bela threw herself on his neck; and not one word of complaint did she utter, not one word of reproach for his long absence. But for my part, I could not help expostulating with him. ‘For God’s sake,’ said I, ‘only think! Kasbitch was just now on the other side of the stream, and we fired at him: it was the greatest chance that you did

not fall in with him. These Gorzans are a vindictive race. You fancy he has no suspicion that you abetted Asamat. I will lay you a bet he recognized Bela. I know he took a great liking to her a year ago: he told me so himself; and also, that, when he should have raised the means to make her father the necessary presents, he would probably become her suitor.' This made Petchorin thoughtful. 'Yes,' he said, 'we must be more cautious. Bela, from this day forth, you must not show yourself on the ramparts.'

I had a long explanation with him in the evening. I was vexed at his change of conduct towards the poor girl: for, besides his spending half his time in field-sports, his behaviour was cold, he seldom showed her marks of fondness, and she was manifestly beginning to fall away in flesh: her little face became smaller, and her large eyes grew dim. If he asked her, 'What ails you Bela; are you fretting?' she would answer, 'No.' 'Is there any thing you wish for?' 'No.' 'Are you grieving for your brother and sister?' 'I have no brother and sister.' It often happened that for whole days together you could not get a word out of her, but yes and no.

* * * *

Kasbitch did not show himself again; only I could

not get it out of my head, that he had not come to the fort for nothing, and that he had some mischief in view.

One day it chanced that Petchorin prevailed on me, to accompany him to hunt the boar. I had refused for a long while; the sport, indeed, was any thing but new to me, and offered me no temptation. He forced me, however, to go with him; so we set out early in the morning, taking with us an escort of five soldiers. We beat about the bushes and the grass, till ten o'clock, but started no game. 'I think we had better go home,' said I; 'what is the good of stopping here? This is plainly no lucky day.' But in spite of heat and fatigue, Gregorii Alexandrovitch would not go back empty handed. That was just his way: whatever he took into his head, must be: it was easy to see his mother had made a spoiled pet of him in his childhood. At last about noon we discovered a boar—bang! bang!—but it would not do; the boar made for the bulrushes, and escaped; the day was decidedly an unlucky one. After we had rested, and taken breath a little, we set out on our way home.

We rode side by side in silence, with our reins slackened, and had nearly reached the fort, which was only concealed from our view by the copse. Suddenly we heard a shot. We looked in each other's faces: the same suspicion flashed upon us both: we galloped

headlong in the direction of the fort, and saw a group of soldiers on the ramparts; they pointed towards the open country, and there sped a horseman with the swiftness of an arrow, holding something white before him on the saddle bow. Gregorii Alexandrovitch gave a loud screech, that the very best Tchetchenz could not have beaten, whipped out his rifle from the case, and away with him, myself following.

Fortunately, as our sporting had not been lucky, our horses were still fresh; they cleared the ground at a great rate, and every moment brought us nearer and nearer to the object of our pursuit. At last I recognized Kasbitch; only I could not make out what it was he carried before him. I was now again alongside of Petchorin, and called out to him that it was Kasbitch. He cast a look at me, nodded, and lashed his horse.

At last we were but a rifle shot from the robber. Whether it was that Kasbitch's horse was fatigued, or that it was worse than ours, at any rate, he did not make good way. I warrant he thought of his Karagos at that moment.

Looking round at Petchorin, I saw him present his rifle while galloping at full speed. 'No firing!' I shouted to him; 'reserve your charge, we will catch him yet.' But such is youth; it never gives fire at.

the right moment. The shot went off whilst I was speaking, and the ball struck the horse in the hind leg; it still kept on for a few paces, stumbled, and fell on its knees. Kasbitch was instantly on his feet, and now we saw that he had a female closely muffled up in his grasp. It was Bela—poor Bela! He shouted something to us in his own language, and raised his dagger to strike. There was no time to be lost, I fired almost at random, and thought for certain I had hit him in the shoulder, for his arm instantly fell. When the smoke had cleared away, there lay the wounded horse on the ground, and Bela beside it; but Kasbitch, throwing away his rifle among the bushes, clambered up the rocks like a cat. What would I not have given to bring him down thence with a ball! but both our pieces were discharged. We sprang from our horses and rushed to Bela. Poor creature, she lay motionless, with the blood gushing from her wound. What a miscreant! Had he even stabbed her to the heart—at least it would have been all over at once—but in the back! it was a genuine robber's stroke. She was insensible: we tore up her veil, and stanchd the wound as well as we could: in vain Petchorin kissed her cold lips—nothing could bring her back to consciousness.

Petchorin mounted; I lifted her from the ground,

and placed her carefully before him on the saddle ; he put his arm round her, and we rode back to the fort. We sent for the surgeon ; he was rather drunk, but he came ; and having examined the wound, he told us she could not live two days. He was wrong however—

L.—Did she recover ?

M.—No. The surgeon was only thus far mistaken, that she did survive for two days.

L.—But tell me, how had Kasbitch contrived to carry her off ?

M.—In this way. Contrary to Petchorin's express desire, she had gone out of the fort to the stream. The weather you see, was very hot, so she sat down on a stone, and bathed her feet in the water. Just then Kasbitch stole along, pounced upon her, clapped his hand upon her mouth, dragged her into the thicket, where he sprang on his horse with her, and was off. Meanwhile she had been able to cry out ; the sentinels were alarmed ; they fired, but missed ; and at that moment we came up.

L.—But what was Kasbitch's motive for carrying her off ?

M.—Motive ? Why, they are all notorious robbers, these Circassians. If any thing is badly watched, you may be sure they will not leave it alone. Many a thing may be of no use to them, but they

steal it for all that. Besides he had long had a fancy for the girl.

L.—And Bela died ?

M.—She died ; but she suffered long, and we also with her. She became conscious again about ten, that night. We were sitting by her bedside. The moment she opened her eyes, she called for Petchorin. ‘ Here I am, my zhaneshka ’ (my little soul), he said, taking her hand in his. ‘ I shall die,’ she said. We began to comfort her, and told her the surgeon had promised for certain he would bring her round. She shook her head, and turned her face to the wall : she was loath to die.

During the night she began to be delirious ; her head burned, and feverish shiverings repeatedly convulsed her frame. She spoke in disjointed phrases, of her father and her brother ; she would go to the mountains, to her home. Then she talked of Petchorin, calling him by all sorts of endearing names, or upbraiding him for having ceased to love his zhaneshka. * * * *

Well, well ! it was a good thing she died ; for what would have become of her, had Petchorin forsaken her ? It would certainly have come to that, soon or late. One thing I confess, particularly distressed me : she never once uttered my name before she died ; and

yet I am sure I loved her like a father. Well, God forgive her for it!—And indeed for that matter, who am I, that she should think of me in her last moments?

L.—How did Petchorin bear it?

M.—Petchorin was a long time ill; he wasted away, poor fellow: we never spoke again of Bela, from that time forth. Three months afterwards he was transferred to another regiment, and left Georgia; we have never met since.

L.—Did you never hear what became afterwards of Kasbitch?

M.—Of Kasbitch? I really do not know. I am told indeed that there is among the Shapsooks, on our right flank, a certain Kasbitch, a wild dare devil, that rides at a foot-pace in his red beshmet, in front of our artillery, and bows politely when a cannon ball whizzes past him; but it can hardly be the same.





CHAPTER IX.

RUNJEET SINGH'S FAMOUS HORSE LYLEE—ANECDOTES— PERSIAN HORSES.

IT is no unusual circumstance in the East for deadly feuds, such as that detailed in the last chapter, to be occasioned by disputes for the possession of a horse. Quarrels of this kind are very common among the Arab tribes of the Desert, and are often perpetuated from generation to generation. The fatal beauty of Helen scarcely caused more disasters than have severally followed the abduction of many a famous steed. Runjeet Singh, the great ruler of the Punjaub, had a horse named Lylee, which he computed to have cost him 60 lakhs of rupees (£600,000) and the lives of 12,000 soldiers, having been the occasion of several wars. It was the property of Yar Mohammad Khan, of Peshawer; and

Runjeet Singh, after a long contest with that potentate, made the delivery of the animal to him a primary condition of peace. Yar Mohammad tried many stratagems to evade this demand; first, he declared the horse was dead, and when this was discovered to be a falsehood, he made several attempts to palm off other horses on the conqueror, instead of the real Lylee. In the course of the negotiations, Yar Mohammad died, and was succeeded by his brother Sooltan Mohammad Khan, who also prevaricated as long as he could. But at last General Ventura, an Italian in Runjeet's service, ended the matter by a bold stroke. Entering the reception room one day, he once more formally demanded Lylee, and when Sooltan Mohammad began to quibble as usual, Ventura called up his soldiers, whom he had posted in the courtyard of the palace, and pronounced the Khan a prisoner in his own capital. This so astounded the Khan, that he ordered the horse to be brought forthwith, and Ventura quitted Peshawer, with his costly booty.

Lylee was full sixteen hands high, and was magnificently apparelled. His bridle and saddle were splendid, and round his knees he had gold bangles. He was seen by Lieut. Barr's party in 1839, when he was old, and disappointed their expectations. He was then a speckled grey, overloaded with fat,

filthily dirty, and his heels, for want of paring and exercise, were so high, that he limped along with much difficulty. A Dakhini, for which the Maharajah had given about £1000, in their opinion far exceeded Lylee in beauty.

Runjeet Singh's passion for horses has passed into a proverb in the East: it amounted almost to insanity. He was never weary of talking to and caressing his favourite steeds; they were continually in his thoughts, and almost constantly in his sight, adorned in the most sumptuous style. Their bridles were overlaid with gold or enamel, a plume of heron's feathers was fixed to the headstall, strings of jewels were hung round the animals' neck, under which were fastened suleymans or onyx stones, highly prized on account of the superstitions connected with them. The saddles were likewise plated with enamel and gold, and set with precious stones, the pummels being particularly rich. The housings were of Cashmere shawls fringed with gold, and the crupper and the martingales were ornamented in the same style as the other furniture. Even a cart-horse, sent him by the King of England, was dressed out in the same fashion. His Majesty wished to make a suitable return for the shawl tent presented to him through Lord Amherst, by the old Lion of the Punjab, and a very extraordinary selection

was made, upon whose advice is not known. A team of cart-horses—four mares, and one stallion, were sent out from England, under the notion that Runjeet would be glad to rear a larger breed than the native Punjabees. But the fact was, he cared only for showy saddle horses, of high courage, well broken in to the manège of Hindustan, that he could himself ride on parade, or on the road, or set his favourites upon. Accordingly, when the cart-horses arrived at his court, the stallion was immediately put into the breaker's hands, and taught the usual artificial paces. This animal, with its enormous head and coarse legs, stood always in the palace yard, or before the tent of the chief, blazing with gold and precious stones, and was sometimes honoured by being crossed by Runjeet Singh himself. The mares were never looked at, and were held in utter indifference.

When Runjeet Singh had become weak, he adopted a singular method of mounting the tall horses on which he loved to ride. A man knelt down before him, over whose neck, he threw his leg, whereupon the man rose, with the Maharajah upon his shoulders, and approached the horse. Runjeet then putting his right foot into the stirrup, and holding by the horse's mane, threw his left leg, over the man's head and the back of the horse, into the stirrup on the other side.

The Persian cavalry was anciently the best in the East, but the improved incomparable Arab breed of horses was not then in existence. The modern Persian horses seldom exceed fourteen, or fourteen and a half hands high; but, on the whole, they are taller than the Arabs. Their usual fodder is barley and chopped straw; and they are fed and watered only at sunrise and sunset, when they are cleaned. Their bedding is horsedung, dried in the sun, and pulverized. They are carefully clad in clothing suited to the season, and in summer they are kept entirely under shade during the heat of the day. At night, besides having their heads secured with double ropes, the heels of their hind legs are confined by cords of twisted hair, fastened to iron rings and pegs, driven into the earth. The same custom prevailed in the time of Xenophon, and for the same reason: to secure them from attacking, and maiming each other. As a further precaution, their keepers always sleep on the rugs amongst them; but sometimes, notwithstanding all this care, they break loose, and then the combat ensues. A general neighing, screaming, kicking, and snorting, soon rouses the grooms, and the scene for a while is terrible. Indeed no one can conceive the sudden uproar of such a moment, who has not been in Eastern countries to hear it. They

before their heads and haunches stream with blood. Even, in skirmishes with the natives, the horses take part in the fray, tearing each other with their teeth, while their masters are at similar close quarters on their backs.

The ancient Persians sedulously taught their children three things: to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to speak the truth. Their modern descendants never speak the truth when they can help it; archers they are not, although notorious for drawing the long bow; but horsemanship is still in great esteem amongst them. The following amusing anecdote is related by Sir John Malcolm:—

“Before the year 1800,” he says, “no political mission from an European nation had visited the court of Persia, for a century; but the English, though only known in that country as merchants, had fame as soldiers, from the report of their deeds in India. An officer of one of the frigates, who had gone ashore to visit the envoy, when mounted on a spirited horse, afforded no small entertainment to the Persians by his bad horsemanship. The next day, the man who supplied the ship with vegetables, and who spoke a little English, met him on board, and said, ‘Do n’t be seize, bite, and kick each other, with the most determined fury, and frequently cannot be separated

ashamed, sir, nobody knows you: bad rider! I tell them, you, like all English, ride well, but that time they see you, very drunk!' We were much amused at this conception of our national character. The Persian thought it would have been a reproach for a man of a warlike nation not to ride well, but none for an European to get drunk."

The horses of the Toorkmans, or Turkmenians, are much esteemed in Persia, and in the adjacent countries. Turkestan, the native region of these nomads, lies north-east of the Caspian, but their tribes are widely dispersed over Persia, Asia Minor, and Syria. Their horses are large, swift, and possess extraordinary powers of endurance, though their figures are somewhat ungainly. When a Turkman starts on an expedition, he takes with him some hard balls of barley-meal, which are to serve both him and his horse for subsistence until his return. But sometimes in crossing the Desert, when he finds himself unusually faint and weary, he opens the jugular vein of his horse, and drinks a little of the animal's blood, by which he is himself refreshed, and thinks that the horse, too, is relieved. Some of these men and horses have been known to travel nine hundred miles, in eleven successive days.

The Othmanlis or Ottomans, the founders of the

great empire that bears their name, were a branch of the Turkman stock. Othman, the first of their dynasty, was the chief of a small horde, a mere handful of men ; his grandson Amurath I, was he who conquered Adrianople. The first conquests of the Turks were achieved by freemen ; but, after the taking of Constantinople, a new military institution was established ; and the relation between the commander and his warlike servants resembled much more the personal subjection of the Mamelukes to their Beys, than the free allegiance owned by the bands of the west to their Condottieri. The invincible army of the Sultan—the terrible cavalry of whom it was proverbial, that

“— where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod—”

and the Janissaries, who boasted that they had never fled in battle, were all slaves ; torn from their Christian parents in childhood, and reared up under a system of discipline, admirably adapted to the end proposed. It combined the hardihood of the Spartans, the strictness and decorum of the monastic rule, with every encouragement that could nurture the aspiring spirit, and confirm the devoted fidelity of the young soldier. The youths thus brought up, forgot their childhood, their parents, their homes ; knew no native land, but

the Serai; no lord and father, but the Grand Signior; no will, but his; no hope, but of his favour: they knew no life, but one passed in rigid discipline and unconditional obedience; no occupation, but war in the Sultan's service; no personal purpose, unless it were plunder in this life, and, in death, the paradise thrown open to him who fought for Islam. The glory of the Moslem is departed, and the Sultan's army is now a rabble, more formidable to their friends, than to their enemies—but let us see what they were in the plenitude of their strength.

First, we behold the Timarli marshalled beneath the banners of their respective corps; they carry bows and quivers, iron maces and daggers, scimitars and lances; they know how to use these various weapons, at the right moment, with the utmost dexterity; they are trained with rare skill to pursue, and to retire, now to hang back in alert suspense, now to dash forward and scour the country. Their horses, too, claim attention; they come mostly from Syria, where they have been reared with the utmost care, and fondled almost like children. Judges indeed, objected that they were somewhat ticklish to the stirrup, apt to swerve aside, and hardmouthed; this, however, was rather the fault of the riders, who used severe bits, and short stirrups; otherwise the animals were docile,

serviceable, as well on mountainous and stony ground, as on the plain; indefatigable, and always full of spirit. The most accomplished riders were furnished from many a district. It was surprising to see them hurl their maces before them, gallop after them, and catch them again ere they fell. Turning half round, with the horses at full speed, they would discharge their arrows backwards, with unerring aim. Next to these, the Porte sent forth its paid Spahis and its Janissaries. The former, in addition to their scimitars, were armed with lances, bearing small flags; some were also furnished with bows. A few were equipped with coats of mail and morions, but rather for show than for service; their round shields, and their turbans, seemed to them defence enough. The Janissaries, lastly, marched in long flowing garments, armed with scimitars and arquebus; in their girdles the handjar, and the small hatchet; dense in their array, their plumes like a forest. It was as though the camp was the true home of this people. Not only was it kept in admirable order, so that not an oath or altercation was to be heard, no drunken man, no gambling was to be seen in it, nor any thing to be found that would offend either sight or smell; it was also to be remarked, that the life the soldier led at home was but meagre, and sorry, compared with the magnificence of the

camp. For every ten Janissaries, the Sultan maintained a horse to carry their baggage; every five and twenty had a tent, that served them in common; in these they observed the regulations of their barracks, and the elder were waited on by the younger. No Spahi was so mean that he did not possess a tent of his own. How gallant and glittering was their array, as they rode in their silken surcoats, their parti-coloured, richly-wrought shields on their left arms, their right hands grasping the costly mounted sword, feathers of all hues waving in their turbans! But surpassingly splendid was the appearance of their leaders. Jewels hung from their horses' ears, and studded their saddles and housings; chains of gold depended from their bridles. The tents shone with Turkish and Persian decorations; here the booty was laid up, and a numerous retinue of eunuchs and slaves, were in attendance.

The modern Turks in general, prefer the Turkman horse, to the more slender Arabian of pure blood. Their style of riding is very trying to the limbs of the animal, their most favourite manœuvre being to make a dead stop when galloping at the utmost speed. In order to practise this injurious trick, they use a terribly severe bit, which destroys all the fine sensibility of the mouth. The Bedouins, on the contrary,

never use any thing more severe than a snaffle. One of the most precious qualities of the Turkman horse, according to some amateurs, is the admirable instinct with which it seconds its rider in the fight, and itself takes an active part against the foe.

Stevens, in his travels in Egypt, describes a curious scene, highly characteristic of the Turk, and his equestrian sports:—

“It was an excessively hot day,” he says; “you, who were hovering over your coal fires, or moving about wrapped in cloaks or greatcoats, can hardly believe that, on the 20th of January, the Arabs were refreshing their heated bodies by a bath in the Nile, and that I was lying under my tent actually panting for breath. I had plenty to occupy me, but the heat was too intense; the sun seemed to scorch the brain, while the sands blistered the feet. I think it was the hottest day I experienced on the Nile.

“While leaning on my elbow, looking out of the door of my tent towards the temple of Luxor, I saw a large body of Arabs, on foot, on dromedaries, and on horseback, coming down towards the river. They came about half-way across the sandy plain between the temple and the river, and stopped nearly opposite to my tent, so as to give me a full view of all their movements. The slaves and pipe-bearers immediately

spread mats on the sand, on which the principal persons seated themselves; and, while they were taking coffee and pipes, others were making preparations for equestrian exercises. The forms and ceremonies presented to my mind a lively picture of preparing the lists of a tournament; and the intense heat and scorching sands reminded me of the great passage of arms in Scott's Crusaders, near the Diamond of the Desert, on the shores of the Dead Sea.

“The parties were on horseback, holding in their right hands long wooden spears, the lower ends resting on the sand, close together, and forming a pivot around which their movements were made. They rode round in a circle, with their spears in the sand, and their eyes keenly fixed on each other, watching an opportunity to strike; chased, turned, and doubled, but never leaving the pivot; occasionally the spears were raised, crossed, and struck together, and a murmuring ran through the crowd like the cry in the fencing-scene in Hamlet, ‘a hit, a fair hit’ and the parties separated, or again dropped their poles in the centre for another round. The play for some time seemed confined to slaves and dependents; and among them, and decidedly the most skilful, was a young Nubian. His master, a Turk, who was sitting on the mat, seemed particularly pleased with his success.

“The whole of this seemed merely a preliminary, designed to stir up the dormant spirit of the masters. For a long time they sat quietly puffing their pipes, and probably longing for the stimulus of a battle-cry to rouse them from their torpor. At length one of them, the master of the Nubian, slowly rose from the mat, and challenged an antagonist. Slowly he laid down his pipe, and took and raised the pole in his hand ; but still he was not more than half roused. A fresh horse was brought him, and, without taking off his heavy cloth mantle, he drowsily placed his left foot in the broad shovel stirrup, his right on the rump of the horse, behind the saddle, and swung himself into the seat. The first touch of the saddle seemed to rouse him ; he took the pole from the hand of his attendant, gave his horse a severe check, and, driving the heavy corners of the stirrups into his sides, dashed through the sand on a full run. At the other end of the course he stopped, rested a moment or two, then again driving his irons into his horse, dashed back at full speed ; and when it seemed as if his next step would carry him headlong among the Turks on the mat, with one jerk he threw his horse back on his haunches, and brought him up from a full run to a dead stop. This seemed to warm him a little ; his attendant came up and took of his cloak,

under which he had a red silk jacket and white trowsers, and again he dashed through the sand, and back as before. This time he brought up his horse with furious vehemence ; his turban became unrolled, he flew into a violent passion, tore it off and threw it on the sand, and, leaving his play, fiercely struck the spear of his adversary, and the battle at once commenced. The Turk, who had seemed too indolent to move, now showed a fire, and energy, and an endurance of fatigue, that would have been terrible in battle. Both horse and rider scorned the blazing sun and burning sands, and round and round they ran, chasing, turning, and doubling within an incredibly small circle, till an approving murmur was heard among the crowd. The trial was now over, and the excited Turk again seated himself upon the mat, and relapsed into a state of calm indifference."





CHAPTER X.

ARABIAN HORSES.



HE modern Arabs have three breeds of horses, the Atteich, the Kadishi, and the Kohlani. The two former are drudges, or hackneys; the Kohlani is the thorough-bred race; and, according to the popular legend, is descended from the favourite mares of the prophet. Mahomet, as the story runs, was once engaged in battle for three days, during all which time his warriors never dismounted, nor did their mares eat or drink. At last, on the third day, they came to a river, and the prophet ordered that the animals should be unbridled, and turned loose. Mad with thirst, the whole ten thousand rushed headlong to the river, and just as they were on the brink the prophet's bugle sounded their recall. Ten thousand mares heard the call, but five only obeyed it; and, leaving the water untasted, returned to their

standard. Then the prophet blessed these docile mares, and adorned their eyelids with kohl, after the manner of the women in the East ; hence they were called Kohlani, which means *blackened*. They were ridden from that time forth by the prophet himself, and his companions, Ali, Omar, Abubekr, and Hassan, and from them are descended all the noble steeds of Arabia.

The great excellence of the Arab horse is owing partly to the extreme and undeviating care of the Bedouins to keep up the purity of the blood; and partly to the friendly and familiar treatment the animal receives in its master's tent, where it is the pet of his children, and a watchful observer of all his domestic concerns. The Bedouin's mare (they never ride horses) displays all the sagacity and fidelity of the dog; she will never suffer her sleeping master to be surprised by his foes without a warning. It is, therefore, no wonder that to obtain Arab mares, by purchase, is a matter of extreme difficulty. The people of the Desert themselves often give as much as £200 for a celebrated mare, not to be sold to strangers. The sum of £500 has even been given; which, considering the value of money in Arabia and Syria, is enormous. Buckhardt mention a sheikh, who had a mare of great celebrity, for the *half-share*

in the ownership of which he paid £400. This subdivision of ownership is very curious. Sir John Malcolm was informed that the property in a brood mare was sometimes divided amongst ten or twelve Arabs.

In the Desert a mare of high breed is seldom sold without the seller reserving the half, or two-thirds of her. If he sells half, the buyer takes the mare, and is obliged to let the seller take the mare's next filly, or the buyer may keep the filly and return the mare. If the Arab has sold but one-third of the mare, the purchaser takes her home, but must give the seller the fillies of two years, or else one of them and the mare. The fillies of all subsequent years belong to the buyer, as well as all the male colts produced on the first or any following year. It thus happens that most of the Arab mares are the joint property of two or three persons, or even of half-a-dozen, if the price of the mare be very high. A mare is sometimes sold on the remarkable condition, that all the booty obtained by the man who rides her shall be shared between him and the seller.

It is not among the Arabs alone we find horses, like ships, shared among several owners: the same thing prevails in some parts of Ireland. An amusing instance is mentioned in Lord George Hill's "Facts from Gwendore:"—"In an adjacent island, belonging to

this estate, three men were concerned in one horse ; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod, none of them being willing to acknowledge its dependancy, and accordingly it became quite lame. There were many intestine rows upon the subject ; at length one of the ' company ' came to the main land and called on a magistrate for advice, stating, that the animal was entirely useless now ; that he had not only kept decently his proper hoof, at his own expense, but had shod this fourth foot twice to boot ; yet the other two proprietors resolutely refused to *shoe more than their own foot.*"

To steal a horse is reckoned in the Desert code of morals, a highly honourable exploit, if the sufferer be a stranger, or a man of another tribe, which means nearly the same thing as an enemy. Each tribe forms as it were a distinct nation, occupying a certain tract of land, over which it roams continually, in proportion as the pasture is exhausted by the cattle. Now as the whole of this space is necessary for the annual subsistence of the tribe, all who encroach on it are regarded as enemies and robbers, and a war ensues. Events of this kind are of frequent occurrence, and the manner of proceeding on the occasion is very simple. The offence being made known, they

mount their horses, and endeavour to surprise the aggressors' camp, and plunder their cattle. If they find the enemy prepared to meet them, a parley ensues, and the matter is frequently made up; otherwise they encounter each other at full speed with fixed lances, which they sometimes dart, notwithstanding their length, at the flying foe. The victory is rarely contested; it is decided by the first shock; and the vanquished take to flight full gallop over the naked plain of the Desert. Night generally favours their escape from the conqueror. The tribe, which has lost the battle, strikes its tents, removes to a distance by forced marches, and seeks an asylum among its allies.

Boundless generosity, and insatiable covetousness, are strangely mingled in the character of the sons of the Desert. Without wishing to justify the Bedouin's spirit of rapine, we may observe that it is displayed only towards reputed enemies. Among themselves they are remarkable for a good faith, a disinterestedness, a generosity that would do honour to the most civilized people. What is there more noble than that right of asylum so respected among all the tribes! A stranger, nay, even an enemy, touches the tent of a Bedouin, and from that instant his person becomes inviolable. It would be reckoned an indelible shame

to satisfy even a just vengeance at the expense of hospitality. If once the Bedouin has eaten bread and salt with his guest nothing can induce him to betray him.

A Bedouin, named Jabal, possessed a mare of great celebrity. Hassad Pacha, then governor of Damascus, wished to buy the animal, and repeatedly made the owner the most liberal offers, which Jabal steadily refused. The pacha then had recourse to threats, but with no better success. At length one Jafar, a Bedouin of another tribe, presented himself to the pacha, and asked what would he give the man who should make him master of Jabal's mare. "I will fill his horse's nosebag with gold," replied Hassad, whose pride and covetousness had been irritated to the highest degree by the obstinacy of the mare's owner. The result of this interview having gone abroad, Jabal became more watchful than ever; and always secured his mare at night with an iron chain, one end of which was fastened round her hind fetlock, whilst the other, after passing through the tent cloth, was attached to a picket driven into the ground under the felt that served himself and his wife for a bed. But one midnight Jafar crept into the tent, and, insinuating his body between Jabal and his wife, he pressed gently now against the one, now against the

other, so that the sleepers made room for him right and left, neither of them doubting that the pressure came from the other. This being done, Jafar slit the felt with a sharp knife, drew out the picket, loosed the mare, and sprang on her back. Just before starting off with his prize, he caught up Jabal's lance, and poking him with the butt end, cried out, "I am Jafar! I have stolen your noble mare, and I give you notice in time." This warning, be it observed, was in accordance with the usual practice of the Desert on such occasions: to rob a hostile tribe is considered an honourable exploit, and the man who accomplishes it is desirous of all the glory that may flow from the deed. Poor Jabal, when he heard the words, rushed out of the tent and gave the alarm; then mounting his brother's mare, and accompanied by some of his tribe, he pursued the robber for four hours. The brother's mare was of the same stock as Jabal's, but was not equal to her; nevertheless, she outstripped those of all the other pursuers, and was even on the point of overtaking the robber, when Jabal shouted to him, "Pinch her right ear, and give her a touch with the heel." Jafar did so, and away went the mare like lightning, speedily rendering all further pursuit hopeless. The *pinch in the ear* and the *touch with the heel*, were the secret sign by which Jabal had

been used to urge the mare to her utmost speed. Every Bedouin trains the animal he rides, to obey some sign of this kind, to which he has recourse only on urgent occasions, and which he makes a close secret, not to be divulged even to his son. Jabal's comrades were amazed and indignant at his strange conduct; "O thou father of a jackass!" they cried, thou hast helped the thief to rob thee of thy jewel!" But he silenced their upbraidings, by saying, "I would rather lose her than sully her reputation. Would you have me suffer it to be said among the tribes, that another mare had proved fleetier than mine? I have at least this comfort left me, that I can say she never met with her match."

The trick of jockeyship above-mentioned, is not peculiar to the Desert; we trace it even in the Western world. The celebrated clockmaker Sam Slick, talking over a racing project, in which he expects to take in the knowing ones, by deceiving them as to the fleetness of his favourite horse, Clay, expresses himself thus: "Clay is as cunning as a 'coon (raccoon); if he don't get the word g'lang (go along) and the 'Indgyan skelpin' yell with it, he knows I ain't in airnest:—he'll purtend to do his best, and sputter away like a hen scratchin' gravel, but he won't go one mossel faster."

There was in the tribe of Negde a mare no less renowned than Jabal's, which Daher, a man of another tribe had bent his whole soul on possessing. Having in vain offered his camels and all his wealth for her, he determined to compass his ends by stratagem. He stained his face with herbs, dressed himself in rags, and tied up his legs so as to give himself the appearance of a crippled beggar. In this plight, he laid himself down on a spot where he knew that Nabee, the owner of the mare, would pass, and as soon as he saw him, he began to implore piteously for help, saying, he was unable to move, and was dying of hunger. Nabee told the poor wretch to mount behind him, and he would take him to his own tent, and supply his wants. "May your bounty be extolled," replied the pretended cripple, "but I am unable to mount without assistance." Thereupon the compassionate Nabee dismounted, and with much difficulty hoisted the suppliant into the saddle. As soon as Daher felt himself firmly seated, he clapped heels to the mare and started off, shouting, "I am Daher, and your mare is mine." The plundered man called out to him to stop, and hear what he had to say, and the thief, knowing he was safe from pursuit, turned and halted, just out of reach of Nabee's lance. "You have seized my mare," said the latter; "since it is

the will of Allah, I wish you prosperity, but I beseech you do not tell any one how you came by her.” “And why not?” said Daher. “Because another person might be really afflicted, and be left without succour. Were you to tell the tale, the consequence would be, that no one would do a single act of charity, for fear of being duped like me.”


Struck by these words, Daher instantly dismounted, restored the mare to her owner, and embraced him. Nabee went home with him as his guest; they remained together three days, and became sworn brothers.





CHAPTER XI.

FERAL HORSES OF AMERICA—INDIANS AND GAUCHOS.

HE multiplication of horses in America, since their introduction by the Spanish conquerors, has been prodigious. Innumerable herds, each consisting of many thousand animals, roam over the plains of both continents, from Patagonia to the southwestern prairies of North America ; and, notwithstanding the warfare waged on them by man, by whom they are slaughtered for their hides alone, their numbers would increase to a pernicious excess, were it not for the destruction caused among them by floods and droughts. The supply of water often fails in the sultry plains, and then the horses, tortured to madness, rush into the first marsh or pool they can find, trampling each other to death. Rivers have been rendered quite impassable by the stench of thousands that had plunged into them to slake their thirst, and had been



A HERD OF WILD HORSES IN NORTH AMERICA.

drowned, being too much exhausted to crawl up the muddy banks. The beds of many streams in the Pampas are paved with a breccia of bones thus deposited. The periodical swellings of the rivers are no less fatal to them. The mares may be seen, during the season of high water, swimming about followed by their colts, and feeding on the tall grass, of which the tops alone wave above the waters. Thus they lead for some time an amphibious life, surrounded by alligators, water serpents, and other carnivorous reptiles, the marks of whose teeth are often printed on their thighs. The impetuous rush of a herd of wild horses impelled either by some panic or by raging thirst, is called a *stampedo* : one of them is, thus described in Murray's Travels in North-America :—

“About an hour,” he says, “after the usual time to secure the horses for the night, an indistinct sound arose like the muttering of distant thunder ; as it approached it became mixed with the howling of all the dogs in the encampment, and with the shouts and yells of the Indians ; in coming nearer, it rose high above all these accompaniments, and resembled the lashing of a heavy surf upon a beach. On and on it rolled towards us, and, partly from my own hearing, partly from the hurried words and actions of the tenants of our lodge, I gathered it must be the fierce

and uncontrollable gallop of thousands of panic-stricken horses. As this living torrent drew nigh, I sprang to the front of the tent, seized my favourite riding-mare, and, in addition to the hobbles which confined her, twisted the long *lariett* round her fore-legs; then led her immediately in front of the fire, hoping that the excited and maddened flood of horses would divide and pass on each side of it. As the galloping mass drew nigh our horses began to snort, prick up their ears, and then to tremble; and when it burst upon us they became completely ungovernable from terror; all broke loose, and joined their affrighted companions, except my mare, which struggled with the fury of a wild beast; and I only retained her by using all my strength, and at last throwing her on her side. On went the maddened troop, trampling, in their headlong speed, over skins, dried meat, &c., and throwing down some of the smaller tents. They were soon lost in the darkness of the night, and in the wilds of the prairie, and nothing more was heard of them save the distant yelping of the curs who continued their ineffectual pursuit."

Where there is such a profusion of horses, the people cannot fail to be all riders; and such they are, bold and expert beyond all comparison with other nations. The Indians of the Pampas and the Prairies,

whose forefathers fled in horror and dismay from the fatal apparition of the Spanish horses, are now literally 'incorpsed and demi-natured with the brave beast.' Many of the tribes, from being constantly on horseback from their infancy, can scarcely walk. Their legs have become too weak, from long disuse, for that kind of progression, and they loathe and despise it. The proudest attitude of the human figure, as they declare, is when a man, bending over his horse, lance in hand, is riding at his enemy. The occupation of their lives is war, especially against "the Christians," and they pursue it for two objects,—to steal cattle, and for the pleasure of murdering the people; and they will even leave the cattle to massacre and torture their enemies, such is their ferocity, and their hereditary hatred to the descendants of the cruel oppressors of their fathers. The Gauchos, who themselves ride so beautifully, declare that it is impossible to vie with a mounted Indian; for that the Indians' horses are better than their own, and also that they have such a way of urging them on by their cries, and by a peculiar motion of their bodies, that even if they were to change horses, the Indians would beat them. Mr. Darwin related a case in which this fact was proved.

At Cholechel, Bahia-Blanca, General Rosas' troops encountered a tribe of Indians, of whom they killed

twenty or thirty. The cacique escaped in a manner which surprised every one: the chief Indians have always one or two picked horses, which they keep ready for any urgent occasion. On one of these, an old white horse, the cacique sprung, taking with him his little son: the horse had neither saddle nor bridle. To avoid the shots the Indian rode in the peculiar method of his nation, namely, with an arm round the horse's neck, and one leg only on its back. Thus hanging on one side he was seen patting the horse's head, and talking to him. The pursuers urged every effort in the chase; the commandant three times changed his horse, but all in vain; the old Indian father and his son escaped, and were free. What a fine picture one can form in one's mind: the naked bronze-like figure of the old man with his little boy, riding like a Mazeppa on the white horse, thus leaving far behind him the host of his pursuers!

Colt breaking is managed by the Gauchos, or Guassos, as they are called in Chili, with the lasso, much in the same way as by the Kalmucks. Their skill in the use of this instrument is extraordinary, and it was a weapon of great power in their hands during the war of independence. They never failed to dismount cavalry with it, or to throw down the horses of those who came within their reach. There,

is a well authenticated story of eight or ten Guacho who had never seen a piece of artillery until one was fired at them in the streets of Buenos Ayres. Notwithstanding the effect of the fire they galloped fearlessly up to it, placed their lassos over the cannon, and by their united strength fairly overturned it.

Another anecdote is related of them, which may be true, though it does not rest on such good authority. A number of armed boats were sent to effect a landing at a certain point on the coast guarded solely by these horsemen. The party in the boats caring little for an enemy unprovided with fire-arms, rowed confidently along the shore. The Guassos meanwhile were watching their opportunity, and the moment the boats came sufficiently near, dashed into the water, and throwing their lassos round the necks of the officers, fairly dragged every one of them out of their boats.

The idea of being thrown, let the horse do what it likes, never enters the head of a Gaucho: a good rider, according to them, is a man who can manage an untamed colt, or who, if his horse falls, alights unhurt on his own feet. "I have heard," says Mr. Darwin, "of a man betting that he would throw his horse down twenty times, and that nineteen out of these he would not fall himself. I recollect seeing

a Gaucho riding a very stubborn horse, which three times reared so excessively high as to fall backwards with great violence. The man judged with uncommon coolness the proper moment for slipping off, not an instant before or after the right time. Directly the horse rose, the man jumped on his back, and at last they started at a gallop. The Gaucho never appears to exert any muscular force. I was one day watching a good rider, as we were galloping along at a rapid pace, and thought to myself, surely if the horse starts, you appear so careless on your seat, you must fall. At this moment a male ostrich sprang from its nest right beneath the horse's nose. The young colt bounded on one side like a stag; but as for the man, all that could be said was, that he started and took fright as part of his horse.

“ In Chili and Peru more pains are taken with the mouth of the horse than in La Plata, and this is evidently in consequence of the more intricate nature of the country. In Chili, a horse is not considered perfectly broken till he can be brought up standing, in the midst of his full speed, on any particular spot; for instance, on a cloak thrown on the ground; or until he will charge a wall, and, rearing, scrape the surface with his hoofs. I have seen an animal bounding with spirit, yet merely reined by a fore-finger and

thumb, taken at full gallop across a court-yard, and then made to wheel round the post of a verandah with great speed, but at so equal a distance, that the rider, with outstretched arm all the while, kept one finger rubbing the post; then making a demivolte in the air, with the other arm outstretched in a like manner, he wheeled round with astonishing force in an opposite direction.

“ Such a horse is well broken, and though this at first may appear useless, it is far otherwise: it is only carrying that which is daily necessary into perfection. When a bullock is checked and caught by the lasso, it will sometimes gallop round and round in a circle, and the horse being alarmed at the great strain, if not well broken, will not readily turn like the pivot of a wheel. In consequence, many men have been killed; for if the lasso once makes a twist round a man's body, it will instantly, from the power of the two opposed animals, almost cut him in twain.

“ In Chili I was told an anecdote which I believe was true, and it offers a good illustration of the use of a well broken animal. A respectable man, riding one day, met two others, one of whom was mounted on a horse which he knew to have been stolen from himself. He challenged them; they answered by drawing their sabres and giving chase. The man on

his good and fleet beast kept just ahead ; as he passed a thick bush he wheeled round it, and brought up his horse to a dead check. The pursuers were obliged to shoot on one side and ahead. Then instantly dashing on right behind them, he buried his knife in the back of one, wounded the other, recovered his horse from the dying robber, and rode home. For these feats in horsemanship two things are necessary ; a most severe bit, like the Mameluke, the power of which, though seldom used, the horse knows full well ; and large blunt spurs, that can be applied either as a mere touch, or as an instrument of extreme pain. I conceive that with English spurs, the slightest touch of which pricks the skin, it would be impossible to break a horse after the South American fashion."

Nothing is done on foot by the Gauchos that can possibly be done on horseback. Even mounted beggermen are to be seen in the streets of Buenos Ayres and Mendoza. The butcher, of course, plies his trade on horseback, in the manner thus described by Basil Hall :—" The cattle had been driven into an enclosure or corral, whence they were now let out one by one, and killed ; but not in the manner practised in England, where they are dragged into a house, and despatched by blows on the forehead with a poleaxe.

Here the whole took place in the open air, and resembled rather the catastrophe of a grand field-sport than a deliberate slaughter. On a level space of ground before the corral were ranged, in a line, four or five Gauchos on horseback, with their lassos all ready in their hands, and opposite them another set of men, similarly equipped, so as to form a wide lane, extending from the gate of the corral to the distance of thirty or forty yards. When all was prepared, the leader of the Gauchos drew out the bars closing the entrance to the corral, and, riding in, separated one from the drove, which he goaded till it escaped at the opening. The reluctance of the cattle to quit the corral was evident, but when at length forced to do so, they dashed forward with the utmost impetuosity. It is said, that in this country even the wildest animals have an instinctive horror of the lasso; those in a domestic state certainly have, and betray fear whenever they see it. Be this as it may, the moment they pass the gate, they spring forward at full speed with all the appearance of terror. But were they to go ten times faster, it would avail them nothing against the irresistible lasso, which, in the midst of dust and a confusion seemingly inextricable, is placed by the Gauchos, with the most perfect correctness, over the parts aimed at. There cannot be con-

ceived a more spirited or a more picturesque scene than was now presented to us. Let the furious beast be imagined driven almost to madness by thirst and a variety of irritations, and in the utmost terror at the multitude of lassos whirling all around him ; he rushes wildly forward, his eyes flashing fire, his nostrils almost touching the ground, and his breath driving off the dust in his course. For one short instant he is free, and full of life and strength, defying, as it were, all the world to restrain him in his headlong course ; the next moment he is covered with lassos ; his horns, his neck, his legs are all encircled by those inevitable cords, hanging loose, in long festoons, from the hands of the horsemen, galloping in all directions, but the next instant as tight as bars of iron, and the noble animal lying prostrate on the ground motionless and helpless. He is immediately despatched by a man on foot, who stands ready for this purpose with a long sharp knife in his hand ; and as soon as the body is disentangled from the lassos, it is drawn on one side, and another beast is driven out of the corral, and caught in the same manner.

While the more serious business was going on, a parcel of mischievous boys had perched themselves on a pile of firewood close to the corral ; and being each armed in his way, with a lasso made of a small strip

of hide, or of whipcord, got the first chance to noose the animals as they rushed out. They seldom failed to throw successfully, but their slender cords broke like cobwebs. One wicked urchin, indeed, more bold than the rest, mounted himself on a donkey that happened to be on the spot; and taking the lasso which belonged to it—for no description of animal that is ever mounted is without this essential equipment—and placing himself so as not to be detected by the men, he threw it gallantly over the first bullock's neck. As soon as it became tight, away flew the astonished donkey and his rider: the terrified boy soon tumbled off; but poor Neddy was dragged along the ground, till a more efficient force was made to co-operate with his unavailing resistance.

The immense abundance of horses in South-America cannot be more strongly exemplified than by the following statement:—

“I have still in my possession,” says Mr. Robertson, “a contract which I made in Goya, with an *estanciero*, for twenty thousand wild horses, to be taken on his estate at the price of a *medio* each; that is to say *threepence* for each horse or mare! The slaughter of them cost *threepence* a-head more; the staking and cleaning of the hides, once more, *threepence*; and lastly, a like sum for the carting to Goya:

making the whole not one shilling for each skin. Of this contract ten thousand animals were delivered; the skins were packed in bales and sold in Buenos Ayres at six reals, or three shillings each, and they sold ultimately in England for seven or eight shillings, that is, for about twenty-eight or thirty times the first cost of the horse from which the skin was taken. Such is the accumulative value sometimes of the produce which is taken from the hands of the grower in one country before it gets into the hands of the consumer in another.



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